A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSION AMONG THE AO NAGA TRIBE IN NAGALAND: 1872-1955

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I dedicate this work in memory of my mother-in-law, Thresiamma Thomas, for her financial support at the early stage of this study, and her encouragement until her last day on Oct 16, 2015.

Thank you.

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PREFACE

In the first place, this work is the product of personal love for historical exploration. It was a sheer joy and delight to revisit the history of the American Baptist Mission for nearly 100 years among the Ao Naga tribe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Flipping through the pages of history vividly brought back the memory of the American Baptist mission involving the church in my ancestral home village. On many occasions, this study was an eye-opening experience. A few remarkable encounters during the study are mentioned here. A missionary couple first arrived in a corner of India in 1872. Even the glimpse of the Ao Naga headhunters from the *Warrior's Abode* sent a chill to their bodies. The Christian mission commitment and the American missionaries' love for the natives was inspiring. By their dedicated service, the Christin mission penetrated the Ao Nagas' culture and society and transformed it. The methodology of this study is based on vernacular and indigenized mission studies.

The thesis of this study was focused on the transformation of society by the mission. What did the mission do? How did they do it? This study primarily attempts to answer these two questions. The task to handle the old and new existing materials and interpret them contextually for today's readers was a thrilling experience. To review the primary sources was particularly challenging for two reasons: the British colonial administration documents were meant for political purposes; it was not a mission report. The collaboration between the mission and the administration had to be read between these two lines. Early missionary Dr. Rev. Edward W. Clark's mission documents were reliable. However, later owing to political instability and other unavoidable circumstances, the documents were not always consistent. To make a good report from somewhat inconsistent documents was hard. To handle the secondary sources was even harder at times. Most of the source materials were written in Ao vernacular. To translate those

vernacular writings was like Greek New Testament transliteration into English. The author has given the best effort to make this study authentic and reliable.

I want to acknowledge my professor Dr. Kevin Xiyi Yao for his encouragement throughout this study. We traveled together to different parts of the world for this study's purpose. Dr. Yao's advice to my stray mind to stay focused was a great lesson learned during this study. His comments on certain important issues and his step-by-step guidance for the final thesis project will remain invaluable. A mission studies scholar, Dr. Bobby Bose, my second reader's keen insight and comments were of great value. Moreover, Dr. Bose's encouragement and his friendship are unforgettable. My friend, Dr. Bob Morrison did the hard work of editing my grammar and other details in the text. My friend, Benjamin Westerhoff did the second editing. He organized the text to maintain the flow of the thesis. Sarah Lincoln, my daughter did the footnoting, paging, and other important necessary details for the thesis project. During this study, I stole time away from my children to focus on my study. My children stood by my side and endured to the finish line. I am thankful to Dr. Abraham Kim, the former General Director of the University Bible Fellowship in Chicago for partial financial support for this study. I want to extend my gratitude to my friends and family across the continent for their best wishes for this study. I am indeed grateful to my wife Dr. L. Elizabeth Lincoln. She has been my critic and friend. Her presence was a source of strength to me. With all humility, I acknowledge that with a full-time pastoral responsibility to complete this study was a challenging task, but with the Lord's help, became quite an accomplishment that brought great joy. To God be all the glory!

ABSTRACT

The mission among the Ao Naga tribe of Nagaland, India, left a profound impact on their culture and society. Through vernacular translation, the mission penetrated the Ao Naga social milieu and the Ao Nagas entered the mission. Christian mission was indigenized in the culture. Jesus Christ was “reborn” in the Ao Naga social milieu. He found a residence among the Ao Nagas. Ao Naga traditions experienced a metamorphosis. This study is a historical investigation., Ao Naga traditional values and principles were found to be flexible, and formattable. Their cultural heritage was repaired, transformed, and made stronger.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Objectivity in History

At the outset, a brief note on the mission historian's attitude is necessary. A student of mission history is endowed with the privilege and responsibility to investigate and interpret the empirical data available to them. The important thing to bear in mind is objectivity in history while making an informed decision on certain interpretations. It often happens that failure to maintain objectivity in mission history leads to a different outcome, even by using the same empirical data by two different historians. One must reach an informed decision based on careful analytical observation.

For a student of mission history, how we interpret the data materials at our disposal is not without prejudice. As a matter of fact, we bring our own biases while interpreting the historical data. However, one should be careful not to lose sight of objectivity in history. Despite our own bias, there are certain compelling, underlying values in every piece of data we hold. It is indeed a mission historian’s noble responsibility to uphold the value of their data in its own historical context. Students of mission history must use their discretion while making judgments. With that being said, we shall now turn our attention to the story of the American Baptist Mission Union (ABMU)[1] among the Ao Naga tribe of Nagaland, a corner in India. In the minds of 21st century Ao Nagas, the ABMU historiography in the 19th and early 20th century may appear ancient. It is

1. From now on only the abbreviated form of ABMU will be wherever is necessary throughout this study.

too far remote for today's readers. Therefore, a student of mission history must carefully observe and examine to decipher the historical crafts and interpret them in proper context.

What is Their Story?

The influence of the mission on culture and society of the Ao Naga, called "Aor sobaliba"[2] through the ABMU in the late 19th and early 20th Century, can hardly be minimized. Within a hundred-year period (1872-1972), the Ao Nagas became a Christian society. Consequently, the Ao Nagas, one of the largest tribes in Nagaland, were instrumental in bringing the other 14 Naga tribes into Christian mission. The mission influence through the ABMU was so extensive in Nagaland that today it has become a cliche to say that there are more Baptists in Nagaland than in the state of Georgia or Mississippi in the USA. A fresh look into this historical process would be well appreciated in order to re-evaluate the epic influence of the ABMU on the Ao Naga culture and society. This will help readers make more informed decisions about their social and cultural heritage. This study is a historical exploration, we will carefully analyze the documents pertaining to the Christian mission among the Ao Naga during the period under investigation.

In the aftermath of India's Independence in 1947, the political climate in the entire region was increasingly hostile for the American Baptist Mission Union to continue their work in the area. Owing to such difficulty, the ABMU had no choice, but left the mission to the native leaders and returned home. The mission could not see a bright prospect to come back in the foreseeable future. The last missionary couple to leave the Impur Mission Station was Rev. &

2. Ao is the name of the tribe and the people are called "Aor." The term "sobaliba" is translated as "culture and society." One scholar, Dr. Mar Imsong, stated that "Aor sobaliba" cannot be sufficiently defined in English, though he agrees with the culture and society nuance of "Aor sobaliba." Scholars generally agree that "Aor sobaliba" can rightly be translated into English as "culture."

Mrs. Delano, on February 8, 1955. This study chose the year 1955 as the cutoff year to mark the transition of mission leadership from ABMU to the native Ao Nagas.

There are three primary reasons why this study is significant. First, this study is unique in that it is based on advanced research mission studies with special emphasis on contextual mission. It is a thorough investigation of the American Baptist Mission Union historiography pertaining to the Ao Naga mission from 1872-1972. Furthermore, this study has the advantage of examining new materials that have only been available from the beginning of the 21st century. Second, while many may have undertaken similar studies in the second half of the 20th century, it is necessary to take a fresh look at the historical documents and re-interpret them periodically. Most of the materials we examine for this study are not entirely new, but it is time to reexamine such documents from a new perspective using the present Ao Naga frame of mind. Third, in the last five decades, others have done the labor-intensive work of exploring different aspects of the mission strategy. Specifically, they analyzed how it worked for them in the Ao Naga Hills District of Assam during the period undergoing study. However, Ao vernacular mission and its significance has not received enough recognition. What did the mission do? How did they do it? What was the outcome of the mission influence? This study is primarily based on Andrew F. Walls' the "Indigenizing Principle," and Lamin Sanneh's "theory of vernacular mission." Later in this study, we will formally introduce Professor Walls and Sanneh's theological frameworks.

A brief mention of the reasons for choosing the Ao-Naga tribe as the subject of this study is necessary here. The Ao Nagas were the first to receive the Christian mission in the region. Sequentially, the ABMU established their mission field in 1872. The Ao Nagas were instrumental in bringing the other 14 Naga tribes to the Christian mission, and simultaneously provided the necessary leadership in the field of education. Thus, a study about the Ao Nagas

would be considered a microcosm for the understanding of the other 14 intrinsic tribes. Furthermore, the British political officers who served in the area such as Hutton, Mills, and ethnographers like Haimendorf, recorded the positive influence on the Ao Naga tribe. J. P. Mills observed the Ao Naga had "several characteristics not found in any of the Naga tribes."[3] J. P. Mills was the British political officer, Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) in Mokokchung. His work, *The Ao Nagas,* provided ample information on the Ao Naga traditional culture and society.[4] Mills must have developed a close affinity with the Ao Nagas during his short stay in Mokokchung that he dedicated his work *The Ao Nagas* to all his Ao friends. Mills' dedication note says, "KUTOMBA KUTUNG TELU TENINGKO NINA SITI IBATU ZULUOGO." "To all my (Ao Naga) friends and beloved I wrote this letter." It was interesting to note that though Chongli was the mission vernacular translation, and was popularly used in Ao churches for liturgy, Mills wrote his dedication note in Mongsen dialect. In chapter two we will touch on the question of why Clark's vernacular translation was in Chongli dialect.

Theological Framework

We shall now formally introduce Professor Andrew F. Walls and Professor Lamin Sanneh's theological frameworks for this study. First is Sanneh's "vernacular translation" from his work *"Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture"*, published by Orbis Book, Maryknoll, New York, 2009. Prof. Sanneh taught at Yale Divinity School (YDS).[5] To his credit, Prof. Sanneh had command over wide ranges of cultural experiences as well as academic

3. J.P. Mills, The Ao Nagas, Macmillan and Co. London, 1926, p. 1.

4. Mills was a British political officer (Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil) in Mokokchung (1917-1924).

5. I was saddened to learn that recently Sanneh passed away. But his work will continue to influence the researchers for many more years to come.

excellence. Therefore, his writing should enlighten every mission scholar in the field. At the same time, to properly apply his theory, we need to observe his writing closely. He observed: "Mission is essentially praxis, and that entails not only upholding the truth but also the relationship and communication."[6] From the above citation one can see that the task of mission practitioners is to uphold the truth and at the same time build a relationship.[7] Prof. Sanneh opines that building a relationship should come first in the process of communicating the message.

A student of mission may ask, what is cross-cultural mission? "By mission is meant the effort to effect passage over the boundary between faith in Jesus and its absence"[8] Here mission is understood as an endeavor to effectively cross the boundary between faith in Jesus and where it is not yet present or translated anywhere in the world. In his book, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture,* Prof. Sanneh refers to missionary translation to the task of translating the message of the gospel into a local dialect. It must be a specific geographical location in a specific historical setting. We will leave the detailed discussion on specific location and historical setting to our next project and focus on the significance of vernacular translation for this study. Sanneh's vernacular translation implies a contextual mission. It emphasizes an "unreached people group," the recipients of the message who have otherwise never heard it before.[9] Messages must be communicated in the respective local dialect. It is the same as saying

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6. Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture,* Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 2009, p. 33.

7. Upholding the truth is to remain true to the gospel message. However, extremes exist in mission praxis. One can remain true to the message and not able to translate the message to the expected audience. On the other hand, missions may go overboard to assimilate into the local culture and society. Phil Parshall in his article "Going too far?" *Perspective, on the world Christianity,* 2009, p. 663-664. Parshall was a missionary in Bangladesh for nearly ten years, trying to translate the message into the Muslim community. He came up with the question, "How far is too far?" p. 38.

8. Sanneh, *Translating the Message,* p. 9.

9. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne and several other associate editors. *Perspective: On the World Christian Movement: A Reader,* p. 531, published by William Carey Library, Pasadena, CA, 2009. It was

to a Brahmin in India, we must give a drink of water in a Brahmin glass. A Brahmin will not drink from the glass of another social class in India. It must also be communicated in a way that the hearer of the message understands and can accept. What would be the best way to relate to a certain unreached people of a cultural group? The use of vernacular was of cardinal significance of the Christian mission among the Ao Naga and elsewhere. The Christian mission crossed the culture by adapting a vernacular mission.

Professor Sanneh pointed out two kinds of mission praxis; mission by "diffusion" and "translation."[10] According to Sanneh, mission by "diffusion" means the transportation of the missionary culture and is "implanted in other societies primarily as a matter of cultural adoption." Professor Sanneh made a reference to Islam for this method of mission which assumes that the acceptance of the message must be adherence to the sacred Arabic Scripture in law and action. It has more to do with adherence to the original Arabic language of their sacred Scripture and to the originating culture of Islam in their daily religious practice. The other type is by translation, in it "the recipient culture as a valid necessary locus of the proclamation, allowing the religion to arrive without the requirement of deference to the originating culture." Mission by translation allows "indigenous theological inquiries," Sanneh observed. This is the major difference between the two approaches to the mission study in Sanneh's mind. In brief, Professor Sanneh asserted that "Christianity is first and foremost a religion of the transcendent divine will

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reported that Winter used the term "people group" first in his presentation at Lausanne Conference, 1974. The term was well accepted during the conference. Since then, the term "people group" has been widely used in mission study circles. The term has been mutated in different forms and the one "unreached people group" has become popular. In 2007, during the Mission Frontier Conference in Houston, this author had a rare opportunity to have a personal conversation with Ralph D. Winter to ask him about the term "people group." Winter derived the term from the Greek word *ethne* in Matthew 28:19. The Lausanne Conference presentation was focused on the future world evangelization of all people groups (*ethne*). The idea that the church mission for world evangelization must now focus on unreached people groups was in Winter's mind.

10. Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, p. 33.

mediated by the channel of cultural variety and multifaceted appropriation. The cross demands frontier crossing for its transmission, and it is contradictory to its spirit to invoke cultural hegemony…"[11]

Professor Andrew F. Walls was a former missionary to Sierra Leone and Professor Emeritus of the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World at the University of Edinburgh. His work, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Translation of Faith* gives research scholars profound insight in the field of mission studies.[12] We will briefly introduce Walls' "*Indigenizing Principle"* here. Professor Walls observes that the essence of the gospel is that God accepts us "as we are" based on Christ's finished work, not on the basis of what we have become or are trying to become. However, we are conditioned by a particular time and place of our birth, culture, and society. In other words, a human being is not a robot that cannot be influenced by its surroundings, and thus will continue to be influenced by the surrounding culture and history. This is as true for groups as for persons. Christians are in the world but not of the world, separate, yet participating. We confront and yet adapt to the culture. Walls further observed that in the incarnation God is translated into humanity. "...the whole meaning of God is expressed in human categories, as though humanity is the receptor language into which God is translated." [13]

To Walls, God became human is to be a culturally specific human experience and not a "generalized humanity." [14] Walls further observed that in cross-cultural mission, the spread of

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11. Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, p. 38.

12. His work was published by Orbis Book, Maryknoll, New York, January 2004.

13. Walls, *The Mission of the Church Today in the Light of Global History*, p. 19. Word & World, Volume XX, November 1 Winter 2000. Copyright Luther Seminary St. Paul, Minneapolis, MN.

14. This is different from the idea of "rebirth" or "reincarnation" in Hindu philosophy. In Hindu philosophy, human destiny is dependent on one's actions in this present life. In the next life, one could be like a wild

the gospel "leads to Christ being received by faith in other cultures and thus successfully retranslated into the customs and languages of those people." In Walls' mind, every time the gospel is re-translated into a new culture, Christ draws closer to that culture. "The extraordinary thing is that this process of re-translation constantly reveals new truths about Christ." [15] Later in this study we will discuss the significant impact of Walls' theory on the Ao Naga traditional society. The mission made an enroute into the Ao Naga cultural territory. What transpired in the traditional culture and society in the process of conversion to Christianity? The metamorphosis of the Ao Naga traditional society by the mission is the focus of this research study.

As we shall see in the ensuing discussion, the Ao Nagas did not have their own written script. As such, the present written form of Ao dialect is the invention of the ABMU. The mission reduced their spoken dialect into written form by using the Roman alphabet. The Ao vernacular development was a major breakthrough for the mission. The Ao vernacular development and the mission school were the catalysts for evangelism and church planting. As we shall see later in our discussion, our records indicate that with the arrival of Rev. & Mrs. F. P. in 1893, there was a clear shift in mission policy from "preaching the gospel" only, to a policy that included a native education training program.[16] From then on, the mission school became synonymous with evangelism and church planting.

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boar, or snake or like gods. No Hindu would like to be reincarnated as a snake, so they pursue a virtuous living in this present life.

15. In the third edition of *The Next Christendom…"* Philip Jenkins put up at least 4 different portraits of Jesus in the front cover. The idea here is Jesus' appearance changes to different people according to their culture and social ethos. The same Jesus looks different in Orthodox tradition. Similarly, Jesus looks like a Hindu *Hermit* in India. Philip Jenkins observed that in the global south, Christianity is successful mainly because the Assemblies of God Church and other churches that embrace the culture and society of the global south.

16. Joseph Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Mission in Nagaland A Study in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective,* Firma KLM Private Limited, Calcutta, Jan 1, 1984. p.111. Puthenpurakal reported that Haggard was surprised to find that there was no significant schoolwork among the natives. He criticized Clark by saying that there was no mention of schoolwork after Clark has been among the Ao Nagas for more than 20 years. This observation by

Ao Vernacular Translation by the Clarks and Other Missionaries

In recent years, there is a growing anxiety among the Ao Nagas intelligentsia to restore some of the ethos and values of their traditional society. The Ao Nagas were liberated from the social vicious cycle embedded in their traditional society to see the light of the modern world. They will pick up what is necessary in the culture and leave behind which is not so useful for the community and move on to the future. The Ao Nagas traditional society belonged to oral tradition.[17] Oral history is not the focus of this study, but the mission engaged with the Ao Naga culture and society, and their perspective changed. They will read their oral history with an eye of modern literature. This study is divided into four chapters. The process of social transformation of the Ao Naga traditional society will be discussed in these following four chapters.

Chapter one introduces the thesis project and the purpose of this study. The first section of Chapter one will explain the significance of this study, and the theological framework. In the second part, I will do the critical literature review. Literature review is based on three major categories: *Primary sources,* which includes published and unpublished government reports and proceedings; *Monographs* left by social anthropologists and ethnographers in the field; and *Secondary sources,* which include both general and ecclesiastical references.

Chapter two will tell the story of the Ao Naga Bible translation project, which took 35 years to to print the complete Ao Naga Bible in 1964. As Ao folklore has it, an Ao manuscript written on animal skin was eaten by a dog while they were still in Koritang. Thus, the Ao Nagas

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Haggard turned to a positive impact. The Home mission agreed to find a designated Education Missionary for the native Ao Nagas. Since then, Education Missionaries began to arrive at the Impur Mission Station.

17. In the absence of a written history, the tradition of the forefathers was handed down to them from one generation to the other for centuries by oral history.

did not have a written script of their own. Missionary Dr. E. W. Clark and Mrs. M. M. Clark worked through the process from scratch. This chapter will also explore further development of the Ao vernacular based on contemporary Ao Naga Christian literature including that of Dr. Ben Wati. We will make a brief report on two pieces of the Ao vernacular literature.

Chapter three is divided into two sections. In the first section, we will discuss the mission education program initiative for the natives, called "Formal Education" by the Ao Senden Literature Board (ASLB). As we shall see, the native education program was critical for the mission. The mission school became synonymous to evangelism and church planting. In the second part I will briefly discuss the medical mission. The native healthcare service was not one of the mission priorities at first. However, later, the healthcare service to the natives became a necessary effective tool for greater evangelism.

Chapter four will form the main thesis of this research study. Our discussion will focus on the transformation of society by mission with a theological implication. How was the mission localized in the social milieu? What transpired during the process of conversion? What did the mission look like?

At the end of Chapter four, we will sum up the whole thesis focusing on the major discoveries during the discussion in this study. A separate conclusion chapter was not necessary, so we will include concluding remarks at the end of Chapter four and bring closure to this study. We will also include a few suggestions for future research study. On the missiological front, leading missiologists like Lesslie Newbigin,[18] David J. Bosch, [19] and Timothy C. Tennent[20] inspire

18. *The Open Secret,* Eerdmans, 1995.

19. *Transforming Mission,* Orbis Book, 1991.

20. *Invitation to World Missions,* Kregel, 2010.

me to recognize and appreciate the changing landscape for the church's mission enterprise in the millennial era, but I have not studied them here.

Literature Review

A separate section for the literature review of this study was sought, owing to the need to review a large volume of primary sources and monographs. This study is mainly based on three types of literary sources: primary sources, monographs, and secondary sources, including general and ecclesiastical books.

Primary Sources

First, unpublished Foreign Department Proceedings 1832-1913. The primary sources include the unpublished documents from the *British Administration Era of the Foreign Department Proceedings, 1832-1913*. The nature of this material is official records, prepared for specific administrative and political purposes. The same could be a limitation. The researchers should treat these materials as official materials, which are different from mission reports. These documents highlight the British policy in the Ao Naga Hills District of Assam during the period under review. The document, *Assam Judicial Proceeding, 1866* is important, for it allowed the mission to enter the territory beyond British jurisdiction at that time. The British administration was very critical about the ABMU entering the Ao Naga Hills, but later they gave permission to the ABMU to enter the restricted area at their own risk.

Second, published documents, the Government Gazetteers. These sources highlight the relationship between the mission and the local government under the British administration during

the period under review. The tension was that the administration's free reins over the mission were protested.

Third, reports, the census India. These reports support population growth in the new Christian era. The reports also supply information on the growth of native education training programs among the Ao Nagas. Due to turmoil caused by two consecutive world wars, WWI and WWII, and the political crisis in the region, information did not come regularly. Despite such irregularities, these reports are authentic and inform the readers with accurate information. We must pay careful attention while examining such reports and authenticate them with other similar source materials.

Fourth, minutes of Jubilee Conference of the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Mission Union December 18-26, 1886. These reports highlight mission strategy such as charitable work, vernacular translation, and mission schools. The report tells us the heart of the mission.

Fifth, minutes of the Ao Baptist Church Association (ABAM) 1897-1971. These minutes were compiled and published in book form by the ABAM Literature and Education Department in 2014. These documents are a great resource for mission studies. Since its inception, ABAM kept detailed *Minutes* of its annual conference proceedings. This report provides statistical data of church growth among the Ao Nagas during the period under investigation.

Monographs

The *Naked Nagas* by Christopher Von Furer Haimendorf was published by the *Royal Asiatic Society* in Calcutta (Kolkata) in 1962, before Nagaland became a state in the Indian Union.[21] Prof. Haimendorf enjoyed J. P. Mills' hospitality, and he also traveled extensively with

21. Haimendorf was a researcher from Cambridge School of Anthropology, London. At the request of Mills, the sub-divisional Officer (SDO, Civil) at Mokokchung, the Governor General of Calcutta Presidency gave

Mills and visited many of the Ao villages in the early 1920s. His detailed account helps us to better understand the traditional Ao Naga way of life in the distant past. The sequel to the *Naked Nagas by* Prof. Haimendorf was *Return to the Naked Nagas: An Anthropologist's view of Nagaland, 1936-1970.* This was published in 1977 by the Art and Culture Department in Kohima under the tutelage of the Nagaland state government. No study about the Ao Nagas will be complete without the help of Haimendorf's work. However, one should keep in mind that Prof. Haimendorf was an anthropologist and ethnographer. While we appreciate his monograph, one should understand its limitations. This study will examine Haimendorf's work from the perspective of understanding social anthropology.

The second and equally important monograph that comes under this investigation is *The Ao Nagas* by J. P. Mills, first published by Macmillan, London in 1926. The second edition was published by Oxford publisher, Bombay (Mumbai) in 1973, and the third publication was by the Directorate of Art and Culture, Government of Nagaland in 2003. As noted above, Mills was a political officer in Mokokchung. Apart from dispensing his political duties, Mills also contributed significantly to the study of social anthropology and the cultural understanding of the Ao Nagas. Mills invited Haimendorf to visit many Ao villages for his research. Mills' understanding of the Ao Nagas probed deeply into their social habits. Mills chose to dedicate his

permission for Haimendorf to visit Mokokchung. Eventually, Haimendorf became professor at Cambridge School of Anthropology, and visited India several times. In 1989, Haimendorf was awarded an honorary Doctorate by North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, in recognition of his lifetime work and contribution to social anthropology and ethnography. On the way home to London, in New Delhi, Haimendorf stopped by JNU for a brief conversation. The author of this study was running mad after Haimendorf to ask a silly question of why he called the name of the book *Naked Nagas but* was not able to reach him because of the large crowd of professors and social scientists following Haimendorf. The Tirap district used to be a part of the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) until 1957, where Haimendorf carried out his field work. Tirap is now part of the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Telangana district, where Haimendorf had done a major work on ethnography, used to be a district in Andhra Pradesh. However, Telangana became a separate state in the Indian Union in 2015. Amidst such massive social and geopolitical transformations, this monograph remains a cornerstone for ethnic study.

work to all his Ao friends and well-wishers. “To all my friends and beloved I wrote this book.” The importance of Mills’ work for understanding social anthropology and political affairs can hardly be overestimated. But as indicated above, Mills was a British political officer and not a mission strategist. In fact, Mills was an outspoken critic of the missions. Thus, his perspective on missions reflects his own limitations on mission understanding of the local culture and society.

The third group of monographs includes, *The Angami Nagas, The Sema Nagas,* by J. H. Hutton, London, 1921. Mills also published The *Lotha Nagas* by Macmillan, London, 1926. The later monographs do not directly deal with the Ao Nagas. We shall use these monographs as references while dealing with common traits among those tribes with the Ao Nagas. We shall now move on to the secondary sources.

Secondary Sources

In recent years, scholars in the Ao community sought to revive the *Aoo literature.* So, the first step was to establish in 1998 a literature board called the Ao Senden Literature Board (ASLB).[22] The ASLB is the apex body that kept the copyrights to all the *Aoo literature* publications. One of the tasks of the ASLB was to address the controversy around Aoo spelling. They attempted to make a standard Aoo spelling for modern readers. The publication of the *Ao Dictionary* by Professor Renthy Keitzar[23] in 1998 was aimed at an attempt to resolve the issue but controversy remained. Now, with the establishment of this apex body of literature, we have the standard Aoo spelling approved by the ASLB. This gives us a new impetus for the development of the *Aoo literature* for a new generation of readers. The *Aoo literature*

22. The first Ao Literature established in 1946 was different from the current one. From this point on only the abbreviated form of ASLB will be used wherever necessary.

23. Keitzar was the Old Testament professor at Eastern Theological College, Assam, Jorhat.

development during the 1980s and 1990s are outside the scope of this study. As such we will not go into any detail, but a brief note will keep our discussion in perspective.

In commemoration of 125 years of "formal education" in the Ao Naga area, a new book was published by the ASLB, called *Talensen: Reflection on Education among the Ao Nagas.*[24] As the title suggests, *Talensen* informs readers of two things: it reflects on the Ao Naga traditional learning system, and the introduction of the formal learning system or Western education as it was called among the Ao Nagas by the mission. Was there a learning system as such in the Ao Naga traditional society before the mission introduced Western education? The *Talensen's* authors were predominantly occupied with this question.

Talensen is greatly appreciated by the Ao Naga community. However, *Talensen* addresses not just formal education, but also history, sociology, economics, literature, politics, and culture. This wide scope undermines their work in some respects, as they tend to apply the historical data materials out of context. This contextual issue is a major drawback in this piece of local literature.

In recent decades, the quality of information is mushrooming in all areas of the social and cultural life of the Ao Nagas. Native scholars are gaining new insight with a fresh perspective on their traditional society. This was not possible just 50 years ago. In the past, the Ao Naga scholars had to rely heavily on the works of foreign authors in their research studies. We have now fresh new materials on the cultural front of the Ao Naga traditional society in their bygone days. In the following pages, we shall review the literature published by local scholars, as well as outsiders in its historical light.

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24. *Telensen* was published by Ao Student Conference in 2004.

Local writers bring in local flavor to our research table. The first one to introduce here is the work done by Dr. I. Ben Wati.[25] Though Ben Wati lived and died in London, all his work was written in the Ao vernacular. To his credit, Ben Wati published 14 books in all. He was also responsible for the complete Ao Naga Bible published by him in 1964. We will review Ben Wati's works and the ones that are relevant to this study. The most important one for this study is *Aoo Kaketkeno Lipok: Jure Otsu kaket*, published by Jongshinokdang Trust, Clark Theological College, Aolijen, Mokokchung, Nagaland, 2011. This can be translated as *The Genesis of Aoo Literature, a Personal History Book.* This book will highlight the emergence of the development of the Ao Christian literature, especially the development of Aoo vernacular literature. Ben Wati coined several new words in Aoo. The main drawback of Ben Wati's work though is it is in the Ao vernacular, which is inaccessible for non Ao readers in the first place. Thus, his wisdom and knowledge are confined to the smaller circle of the Ao Nagas, and therefore remains provincial. Moreover, Ben Wati was a storyteller. His stories were not focused on any particular social or cultural issue. One has to read between the lines to find the actual meaning of what the author was trying to convey. Furthermore, the work of translation from Ao vernacular was like *Greek* transliteration to many modern local scholars. The translation demands resources for research scholars.

25. Dr. Ben Wati was the contemporary and friend of John R. Stott, Lesslie Newbigin, M.M. Thomas, and Ralph D. Winter. He was the first among the Ao Naga who went to the United States for a seminary education. Ben Wati completed an MTh from a seminary in Minneapolis in 1948. Upon his return to India, Ben Wati was the founder president of the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) in New Delhi. He was also the founder of the Evangelical Theological College in Yavatmal in Maharashtra. He was responsible for bringing World Vision to India and was an active leader of the Baptist World Alliance. Along with a team of workers, Wati translated the entire Bible into the Ao vernacular in 1964. His later life was settled in London and he passed away in 2012, leaving a huge legacy in Aoo Literature. In 1983, this author had the privilege of meeting Ben Wati. After saying goodbye, as we were leaving the house, senior Ben Wati rushed to the door, and forcefully put twenty rupees in my pocket. In 1983, twenty rupees was quite a substantial amount of money for a college student. More than the money, the warm experience of his personal touch will be remembered for a long time.

The second resourceful person was Rev. L. Kijung Ao.[26] His book is called the *Nokinketer Mongchen,* published by the Christian Literature Center Gauhati for Ao Baptist Church Association, 1972. The translation is called *The Warrior's Abode: History of the Origin of Church in Nagaland.* Rev. L. Kijung Ao was one of the first leaders among the Ao Naga Christians. He became the Executive Secretary of ABAM in 1924 and served in that position for 48 years until 1972. His first-hand knowledge working with the American missionaries at Impur Mission Station brings in valuable insight to this study. There was a controversy surrounding his book as some of the Ao Nagas questioned the authenticity of his work. Despite controversy, the significance of Kijung's work should not be discredited. However, Kijung's work was also only accessible to Ao readers, posing a disadvantage to non Ao readers. Furthermore, Kijung Ao was not a mission scholar; he was a mission practitioner, a church leader, and an administrator. We should keep that in mind while reading his work.

This study will also rely on several research works by the Ao Naga scholars in recent years. *History of Christianity in Nagaland, Social Change 1872-1972* by A. Bendangyabang Ao[27] heavily relied on primary sources like the British Administration documents and the ABMU mission reports. However, this work is largely the author's personal observation and lacks thorough evidence-based research methodology. There is hardly any historical contextual interpretation in the entire book. A historian's job is first to observe, and next to interpret the data. This was largely absent from this work. At times, it is unclear whether the author was talking about history or

26. Kijung was the General Secretary of the Ao Baptist Church Association at Impur from 1932-1972. He worked hand in hand with the missionaries for nearly 25 years. In 1962, in view of the Centenary Celebration, Kijung did a thorough research study at the American Baptist Library at Valley Forge Library, Philadelphia. His book, called *Nokinketer Mungchen,* is also in Ao dialect. It was published by the Christian Literature Center, Gauhati, 1972.

27. This book was published by Shalom Ministry Publication, Bangalore, 2004.

something else. The author fails to make a clear distinction between that of historical studies or studies of social systems.

The second work in this genre is by Mar Imsong. His work is entitled, *God -Land-People: An ethnic Naga Identity*, published by Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, Nagaland, 2011. Dr. Imsong's main thesis had to do with the question of Naga identity including the Ao Nagas. Imsong maintained that the Ao Nagas are a group of people with a specific geopolitical location.[28] To Imsong, land is a major part of the Ao Naga identity. However, the author could have given a little more attention to the mission influence in the process of the formation of the Ao Naga social identity in Christian society. The formation of the Ao Naga new social identity is the direct outcome of the Christian mission.

The third author is Rev. Dr.Takatemjen Ao.[29] Dr. Takatemjen is the founder and President, Northeast Alliance for Leadership Education and Social Transformation (NEALEAST). Dr. Takatemjen was a former Principal at Clark Theological College at Aolichen, Mokokchung, Nagaland with 40 years of experience in administration, teaching, preaching, and training. Dr. Takatemjen Ao graduated from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1993. He received his Th.M. from London Bible College, London, and M.Th. from Union Theological College, Bangalore, and B. Th from Yavatmal Theological College, Pune, India. He observes that the Ao Nagas should revisit some of the institutions in their traditional society to bring some of its values and principles into the new Christian society. He believes that such effort to go back and

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28. Currently, Dr. Imsong works for Massachusetts Baptist Multicultural Ministries as founding Executive Director. He finished a ThD in Social Ethics from Boston University. Dr. Mar Imsong himself is an Ao Naga and social worker and peace activist. He is the founder of Nagaland Mercy Ministries Society, Dimapur, Nagaland.

29. *Studies on Theology and Naga Culture.* Dr. Takatemjen Ao was the Principal of Clark Theological College, Aolichen from 1985-2015. He retired and remained as Professor Emeritus at Clark Theological College. On a personal note, Dr. Takatemjen Ao is the cousin of the author of the thesis project.

re-examine some of the cultural ethos will strengthen the Ao Naga theological foundation. He suggested "Jesus" as "Lijapa,"[30] the creator of the earth in the Ao Naga tradition religion. However, the author acknowledged that his work was a compilation of his own occasional seminars and workshop materials. It was not a well-documented historical research study material, and thus we will treat them as such.

Ecclesiastical

On the ecclesiastical front, we have church historians like Dr. F. S. Downs. Downs' work, *The Mighty Works of God,* was published by Christian Literature House, Gauhati, 1971. Dr. Downs was born in Tura in Garo Hills, Assam, to an American Baptist missionary family there. Dr. Downs was a church historian in India. Downs taught in Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, Assam. He also taught at Union Theological College, Bangalore, India. Later Downs taught at Yale University Department of History. Downs' works informs the reader on an overall picture of the work of God in the entire Assam valley. We value his eyewitness account, though it is very limited when it comes to the Ao Naga Hills mission.

A Corner in India by Mary Mead Clark, 1939, in which Mrs. Clark recorded the detailed account of their early mission encounter in Assam, including with the Ao Nagas.[31] Mrs. Clark gives us insight on the position of women in the Ao Naga Christian society. Some of the early observations made by Mrs. Clark about the social habits of the Ao Nagas were proven untrue.

30. Here is a disparity and controversy in the use of spelling. The same *Lijapa* is written as *Lichaba* in Mills' work.

31. Mary Mead Clark was the wife of E. W. Clark.

Had Mrs. Clark revised her report, it would have drastically changed in the light of her own insight about the Ao Nagas in the later days of her stay in the land.

Narola Rivenburg was the daughter of Rev. Dr. and Mrs Sidney Rivenburg and was born in Molungyimsen village in the Ao country; later her family moved to Kohima and she served there with her parents. Narola compiled and edited her parents' personal letters and published them in book form, *The Star of the Naga Hills* in 1939 by the American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia. By popular demand, *The Star of Naga Hills* was reprinted by the Angami Baptist Church Association, Kohima Nagaland, 2014.[32] Narola was fluent in the Ao vernacular as well as in the Angam vernacular called *Thyniei*. Her contribution to child evangelism ministry was greatly appreciated. But Naralo Rivernburg's work was based on personal observation. Her works give us certain aspects of information but cannot be treated as well-documented historical material.

Baptist Mission in Nagaland: A Study in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective, by Joseph Puthenpurackal provides a Roman Catholic perspective on the Christian mission in Nagaland. However, Puthenpurackal's focus of study was the ecumenical movement.[33] He found the Baptist Missions was hostile to the call for an ecumenical movement. As such, his work was not so popular among the Baptist Christian scholars during the period under review. However, Puthenpurackal provides valuable information on the Impur mission school.

In short, this study will investigate the historical data that are pertaining to the American Baptist Mission Union among the Ao Nagas 1872-1955. The cutoff year for this study was

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32. The name "Narola" means flower (beautiful) in Ao. From their letters we can see that Narola was well appreciated by her parents.

33. Joseph Puthenpurackal was a Jesuit mission scholar from south India. He made a comment that the Baptist Mission's exclusiveness was not favorable for an ecumenical movement.

chosen to mark the transition from the mission to the native leadership. Although the mission school was not the main priority in the beginning, later the mission school became necessary for evangelism and church planting. An archetype conversion in which one member of the family or village became Christian then led to all the family members or villagers converting to Christianity at a later point. Following Professor Lamin Sanneh's principle of vernacular translation and Andrew F. Walls' Indigenizing Principle, this study will investigate the social transformation that took place in the Ao Naga traditional social milieu. In the process, the traditional Ao Naga way of life was undergoing a cultural metamorphosis. Thus, the Christian mission used translatability and adaptability as pathways into the Ao Naga custom and tradition.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STORY OF BIBLE TRANSLATION

What did the mission do? This question is a good place to start this chapter. What the mission did was intentional. The mission entered the Ao Naga society by vernacular translation. The mission adapted the local dialect to communicate the gospel, so that the recipient could understand and accept it. Vernacular translation implies incarnational mission in each social environment like the Ao Naga community. The mission appeared in a multifaceted way. In this case, Jesus came into the Ao Naga neighborhood speaking in their own mother tongue. In the following pages we will discuss the ABMU vernacular mission among the Ao Nagas in greater detail.

Chapter Two focuses on the story of the Ao Naga Bible translation.[1] The vernacular Bible translation was the catalyst for social transformation. Based on the information available, the Bible translation project evolved in two distinct stages. The first stage, about a 40-year period between 1872-1911, was a time of laying a foundation. The first vernacular translation by Mary Mead Clark of the *Ao Primer* was published in 1877. The subsequent publication of the *Ao Naga Grammar* by Missionary Clark occurred in 1893. *The* Ao *Naga Dictionary*[2] was published in 1911 by Dr. Rev. Edward & Mrs. Mary J. Mead Clark, the first missionary couple to the Ao Naga tribe. This vernacular translation [3] was a steppingstone for the future Bible translation project.

1. Ben Wati, *Aoo Kaketkeno Lipok Juri Otsu Kaket,* published by Jongshinokdang Trust, Aolijen, 2011, p. .

2. Edward Winter Clark and Mary Mead Clark, the *Ao-Naga Dictionary,* Calcutta, 1911.

The second stage of the Bible translation did not come smoothly. The evidence shows that the threat of WWI & II and the fear and uncertainty of the people must have disrupted normal life in the entire region.[4] The following nearly 20 years (1911-1929) appeared to be the most trying period of the Bible translation. But once the threat of war had ended, and the political situation stabilized in the region, the local leadership was ready to fully engage in the task of the Bible translation project. The records available to this study indicate that the second stage of the Bible translation occurred from 1929-1964. This was the blossoming period of the Bible translation. It would take volumes for scholars to present about all the details from scratch in this monumental work of Bible translation. However, this study will focus on a few important aspects of the project. But first a brief history of the American Baptist mission among the Ao Nagas Hills District of Assam would be necessary before we engage in a fuller discussion on our main topic.

3. Dr. Narola Ao McFayden, *Traveling in time with Pioneers of our Faith*, published by CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016. McFayden devoted her entire work to explore the contribution made by this pioneering missionary Rev. Dr. Edward & Mrs. Mary Mead Clark. McFayden pointed out several key issues in her book about the pioneering work of this early missionary couple. Drinking local rice beer could have been comparable to drinking coffee in North America. But how did drinking local rice beer among the natives became a sin? What role did the native Ao Naga Christians play in bringing Western education to Nagaland? What did early Ao Naga Christians learn in schools? Why are there so many Baptists in Nagaland? McFayden commented that these early pioneer missionaries were ahead of their peers in theology and practice. They worked hard to make the gospel of Jesus Christ relevant to the Ao Nagas by incorporating indigenous elements that would make sense to the early Ao Naga Christians. Thus, showing a due respect for the Ao Nagas and their cultural ethos, for which they were criticized by their peers. McFayden was greatly impressed by the type of pioneering spirit that was necessary for people of faith to cross the cultural boundary. McFayden also greatly appreciated the courage of the early Ao Naga Christians who invited the missionary to their village and taught their children how to read and write in Ao vernacular in their village schools. McFayden observed that this pioneering work was done not by the missionaries alone. The credits should also go to the contribution made by the natives.

4. We will further discuss this aspect in some detail in chapter three.

American Baptist Mission Union (ABMU): Who Were They?

Who were the American Baptist missionaries? How did they encounter the head-hunting Ao Nagas in this "remote part of the world."[5] Ever wonder why the official language in Nagaland state in India today is English? How did the mission transform the local spoken dialect into a written language with Roman letters?[6] Why was this a gift? How come the American missionaries spoke the local dialect so fluently? These are some of the questions that are included in discussion.

The early mission pioneering work in the Ao Naga Hills District of Assam[7] is a beautiful story, and indeed a successful Christian mission story. However, this story was not made in just a couple of years, it evolved through the years of harrowing hardship and toil, as was often the case in early pioneering work in any mission field. The work among the Ao Nagas was over seventy years in the making. The mission involved in this venture endured a crucible moment and overcame insurmountable obstacles and personal losses in the process. Dr. McFayden

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5. In 2006, under the direction of Dr. Elizabeth Lincoln, an associate at the Department of Internal Medicine, Yale School of Medicine, a group of medical students from Yale University conducted a free medical camp at Aonokpu village in Nagaland, India. This medical camp was part of the celebration of the Centennial at the Aonokpu Baptist Church. The medical team took 42 hours by plane, car and on foot to reach the village. One of the team's members, Jonathan Chen, a MD/Ph D student commented that "Those early American Baptist missionaries must have a message to deliver to these people here to come to this remote part of the world. This is a "remote place" in its true sense."

6. As indicated in chapter one, the ABMU was serious about a contextual method of gospel presentation in its mission approach. As we shall see in the following discussion, the missions try hard to indigenize the gospel for the local situation. The mission found many useful social and cultural practices for the benefit of the gospel message.

7. The term "Naga Hills District of Assam" was vaguely used for administrative convenience. The British Administration applied the term to limited areas. The main tribes like Angamis, Lotha, Sema, Ao and their sub-progenes were included in the term "Naga Hills District of Assam." Some political commentators including Kaka D. Iralu today associated the term "Nagas" with other tribes outside of Nagaland state, like the Wancho and Tirap tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, the Karen tribe in Myanmar, part of Bodo tribe in Assam. But this political conglomeration is a recent phenomenon. The first question we must ask is whether the Wancho tribe accept the idea that they are one of the "lost" Naga tribes? The fact of the matter is until recently, the Nagas identified themselves with their tribe names, like Mr. Kiremwati Ao.

discussed in detail the early American missionary couple Rev. Dr. Edward Winter Clark and Mary Mead Clark. Dr. McFayden observed that today the Ao Nagas owe a great deal of gratitude to this early pioneer American Baptist missionary couple. Volumes of books could be written about this early missionary couple among the Ao Nagas. Before we get into a detailed discussion about the Bible translation, a brief report about the activities of the mission in the area during those formative years even before the Clarks arrived is in order.

The Early Attempt to Evangelize and the Making of the Ao Naga Mission

The mission was originally initiated not by a previously Baptist missionary, but by a Congregational missionary who was a Baptist convert, Adoniram Judson. Kijung Ao reported that Adoniram Judson and his wife Ann Hasseltine belonged to the Congregational Church in Plymouth, Massachusetts.[8] The Judsons were commissioned by the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Mission to India on February 9, 1812. In India, the Judsons were convinced by Baptist doctrine and beliefs and their worldview. In Calcutta, they were acquainted with missionary William Carey in Serampore and expressed their desire to join the Calcutta Baptist Church Mission. The Home Board accepted their decision. On Sunday, September 6, 1812, Adoniram Judson and Ann Hasseltine were baptized in Lal Bazar Chapel, Kolkata (Calcutta) by Rev. William Ward. This act is taken by some scholars to mark the beginning of American Baptist Mission in India.

On June 22, 1813, the Judsons left for Burma, today known as Myanmar. In Burma, Judson attempted to evangelize the hill tribes between Burma and Assam including the Ao

8. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mungchen*, Gauhati, 1972, p. 4. Kijung observed that though Judson was not the part of Ao Naga mission, he indeed was the forerunner of the Ao Naga mission. Knowledge of Judson's pioneering work was lost for many years due to unfavorable political conditions in Burma. But in recent years more and more information is coming to light about Judson's missionary activities in Burma. That would benefit the future research.

Nagas. However, Judson's vision and hope to evangelize the hill tribes was "frustrated owing to difficulties to overcome mountainous terrain and deep woods." They had to wait for another opportune time. The next event in the history of Christianity in the Naga hills or Nagaland occurred during the mid-1830s. At the insistence of Major F. Jenkins, the Commissioner of Assam, Gauhati, believed to be a "devout" Christian, a small mission station was established in Sadiya, in upper Assam, modern day Dibrugarh district.[9]

In the meantime, missionary William Carey was under the impression that it would have been more feasible for the Burma mission to evangelize the Naga Hills, and invited Judson to collaborate with the Assam mission at Sadiya. The Judsons were more than glad for this window of opportunity for the mission among the hill tribes between Burma and Assam. The Sadiya mission in Assam would provide a perfect opportunity to serve this mission purpose, and ultimately reach the Shan tribe of south China. Kijung reportedly said that the American Baptist Foreign Mission (ABFM)[10] had been trying to evangelize the Shan tribe in South China for some time. In 1836, Rev. Nathan Brown and O. T. Cutter, who had been working in Burma, were appointed by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Board to work at Sadiya, Assam. The fluid political situation in Assam was not favorable for the mission. The old Ahom kingdom was disintegrating because of a power struggle among the petty local chiefs. This political unrest prevailed all over Assam valley.

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9. This report is supported by the *Foreign Department, Political File A, Aug 1840, No 93,* National Archives, New Delhi. Major Jenkins was believed to be a good friend of missionary William Carey in Calcutta. Kijung observed that the idea of a mission station at Sadiya, Assam was bridged between Burma and the hill tribes of Assam. The vision was beyond the region to ultimately reach the Shan tribe in Southern China. Missionary William Carey influence is to be seen here in this venture. Kijung, p. 10.

10. American Baptist Foreign Mission (ABFM) was a different mission entity from American Baptist Mission Union (ABMU).

The missionaries' attempt to open a "school among the tribal" was unsuccessful because the tribes in the hills were incessantly attacking the population in the valley.[11] Consequently, the mission had to push back and focus its work among the population in the Assam valley. Rev. Brown requested more missionaries in Assam. Two missionary families, Rev. and Mrs. Jacob Thomas and Rev. and Mrs. Miles Bronson were appointed to the workforce in Assam by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Kijung Ao told a heart moving story of how tragedy marred the Thomas family's arrival in the new mission field at Sadiya, Assam. Just a couple of miles away from the Sadiya Mission Station, Rev. Thomas was killed while traveling in a small boat during a storm.[12] The Bronsons and the others arrived at Sadiya on July 17, 1837. The political situation in Assam remained grave during those years.

Thus, missionaries thought that the mission station should move to a safer location, a good distance away from Sadiya to Jaipur.[13] In Jaipur, Rev. Bronson was interested in working among the Naga tribes. Kijung reported that in Jaipur Bronson met a group of Nagas from Namsangia village[14] in Noklak district in modern Nagaland and invited himself to visit their village. An arrangement for Bronson's visit was deliberated with the elders in the Namsangia village. However, during his first visit, Bronson was suspected of being "an agent" of the East India Company.[15] Bronson was quarantined outside the village gate until he was cleared by the

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11. Later, it was found that these tribal were Singpho, Khampti and Abhor. They were not Naga tribes whom the mission had anticipated, p. 5.

12. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen*, p. 8

13. Dr. F. S. Downs observed that this new mission station had been established with a view to revive the Shan mission in South China and at the same time to make a bridge between Assam and Burma.

14. Today, Namsangia is part of Tirap district in Arunachal Pradesh. In 1972, with the commemoration of the *Centennial* celebration, Ao Baptist Church established its first mission field outside of Nagaland state, p. 8-9

15. India was brought under the British Crown only in 1857. Since 1757, it has been governed by the East India Company.

village authority. A week later, missionary Brownson was cleared by the village authority and was admitted into the Namsangia village on March 14, 1840.[16] Kijung observed that the Namsangia village elders were in favor of granting Bronson permanent residence. They built a house and Bronson moved in to live in Namsangia in 1841. For this reason, a section of the church in Nagaland thought March 14, 1840 should mark the beginning of the Naga mission by the American Baptist Foreign Mission.

Mission Retreats to a Safer Location in Assam

Subsequent events indicated that in Namsangia, Bronson's zeal for mission met with great challenges. The Bronson's family's ill-health continued to remain a thorn in the flesh. A beautiful story of Rhoda Bronson's sacrificial life is reported during that time. At the young age of 32, Rhoda Bronson, the sister of Miles Bronson, joined her brother in Namsangia village. After 3 months, Miss Bronson was brought to Jaipur for malaria treatment. In a week, she succumbed to the infection and died. The sorrow of his sister's sudden death must have made a tremendous impact on Bronson. In the meantime, the constant raids by the hill tribes on the population in the plain area were becoming a menace. Owing to such circumstances, the mission was forced to move its station from Jaipur to Sibsagar, the ancient capital of Assam.[17] Thus, the vision to evangelize the hill tribes between Assam and Burma including the Ao Nagas was interrupted for the second time.

16. It was reported that Bronson was kept outside the village for 7 days on the pretext that there was no good drinking water in the village. In fact, the villagers suspected this "white man" to be a spy from East India Company. Kijung, p. 14.

17. A. K. Gurney, History of the Sibsagar Field, 1886, p. 21ff.

It is difficult to find any substantial record about the mission's work from 1841-1869. McFayden reported that one young Ao Naga convert named Samalepzung, from Merangkong village, was baptized by Rev. S. W. Whiting in 1851 in Sibsagar Mission Station.[18] He was working in the Sibsagar Mission printing press for a while, and then he went to his village to get married. But the inevitable had caught up, and while he was getting ready for the big day, Merangkong village (Nowgon) was raided by a more powerful village from the Konyak tribe, and this young man was killed. Thus, another promising young man passed on without leaving a tangible mark among his fellow villagers. Apart from this report, literally, we do not have any record to attest to the mission's work during the last nearly 30 years. But this upsetting situation was about to change. With the arrival of Dr. Rev. Edward Clark & Mrs. Mary J. Mead Clark in Sibsagar Mission Station, the Ao Naga pioneering mission received a new impetus. Later the Ao Naga mission became synonymous with the Naga Hills mission.

A New Horizon for the Ao Naga Mission

Dr. McFayden formally introduced Dr. Rev. Edward Winter Clark and Mary Mead Clark to the readers. Edward Clark was born on February 25, 1830, in the town of North East, New York. Mrs. Mary Mead Clark was born and raised in Amenia, New York. She was born in 1832. Edward and Mary were married on September 29, 1858. Edward received a Master of Arts from Brown University in 1857. Later in 1901, Brown University honored Edward with a Doctor of Divinity degree. He earned an additional Doctor of Divinity from the Central University of Iowa and Simmons College, Texas, respectively.[19] The couple received a missionary calling to India,

18. McFayden, *Traveling in times,* p. 21.

19. McFayden, *Traveling in times,* p. 4-5.

on May 29, 1866. On October 20, 1868, they were commissioned by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Edward and Mary Clark left the comfort of their homes and the fellowship of their loved ones and boarded the *Bark Pearl* for Kolkata,[20] via the Cape of Good Hope. After being on board 137 days, they arrived in Kolkata on March 5, 1869. The Clarks took another venture from Kolkata by ferry via the Brahmaputra River for two weeks and arrived at the southern bank of Sibsagar. They took a "pony ride" and "elephant ride," which brought them finally to Sibsagar Mission Station on March 30, 1869.[21]

McFayden observed that Edward Clark was "assigned" to work in a printing press in Sibsagar Mission Station as manager of the mission printing press. His job description was to improve the Christian literature in the Assamese language. But under Edward's leadership, the "Sibsagar Mission printing press did more than print Christian tracts and church resources. The newspaper called *Orunodoi*,[22] which started publication in 1846, completed six volumes since Edward took charge of the printing press." McFayden observed that from day one, Clark could not remove his eyes from the beautiful hills of Ao Nagas.[23] Edward Clark was a "visionary" and "strategist" McFayden further observed. Referring to his vision for the Ao Naga mission, Edward Clark reportedly said, "how can we ignore the call of Christ from the heathens."[24] Early on, Clark sent Godhula Brown, his Assamese evangelist to the hill country on a "spy the land"

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20. Formerly known as Calcutta.

21. Clarks played such an important role. They laid a firm foundation for future missionaries to build their ministry. This study will not go into detailed discussion about the other missionaries who served in the Ao Naga mission. Later missionaries followed Clark's example. McFayden, p. 11.

22. This was the first Assamese newspaper.

23. McFayden, *Traveling in times*, p. 16ff.

24. S. W. Rivenburg. *Historical Sketch of the Ao Naga Mission*, in the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union. Papers and Discussion of the Jubilee Conference held in Nowgong, December 18-29, 1886.

mission to follow up his vision for the Ao Nagas. After being in the hills for about 6 months, Godhula Brown brought several new converts to Sibsagar Mission Station. Clark baptized them and upon return to their village these new converts established a small church at Molung (Dekaihamong) village. This must have been a clear sign for Edward and Mary Mead Clark to leave Sibsagar Mission Station in search of a new mission station in the Ao Naga Hills. Thus, Clark moved into Molung village in the Ao Naga Hills in 1874.[25] Before we get into our main discussion on vernacular translation, we should set our context. A brief note on the background of the Ao Nagas would be necessary here.

Who were the Ao Nagas? Where did they come from? Where do they live? What language do they speak? What do they believe? Mills reported that the Ao Naga tribe belonged to the Indo-Burmese, Borneo, Polynesia, and Micronesia group. Mills further observed that the Ao Nagas were the most advanced tribe among all other Naga tribes. The present area of the Ao Naga territory is 1, 615 square kilometers, and the population was 194,622 according to the Statistical Handbook of Nagaland, 2015. Mr. Alemchiba Ao, the then Director of the Department of Art and Culture, Nagaland, conferred with Mills that the Ao Naga belonged to the Indo-Burmese language group.

Origin of the Ao Nagas

The Ao Nagas hold to their tradition that the Ao tribe originally came out of "Lungtrok" or "Ongtrok" (it literally means "six stones" in Koritang). According to this tradition, the Ao Nagas originally lived for a while in Koritang. As the population increased, they migrated toward a northwestern direction and settled in five ranges known as Japukong, Changkikong, Asetkong,

25. This was known as Dekaihamong or Molung village. Later in 1876, to avoid confrontation, a group of new believers went out and established a new location called Molungyimsen village.

Langpangkong, and Ongpangkong. They consisted of at least seven villages and were administered by individual local self-governments. The Ao country is situated at an altitude of 1, 326 meters above sea level. The Ao Nagas enjoy a mild temperature like Indian summer during the summer months and a mild cold winter. The Ao Naga folklore has them believe that their script inscribed on animal skin was eaten by a hungry dog while they were still in Koritang. Thus, the Ao Nagas lost their script early on and did not have their written script. As such, the Ao Nagas passed on their tradition through word of mouth from one generation to the next generation.

What Did They Believe?

The Ao Nagas were out of the reach of the mainland India's main religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. "The Religion of the Ao is not a moral code like in the Jewish tradition. It is a system of ceremonies and strive as he may to do that which is lawful and right in the moral sphere," [26] Unlike the Jewish law of social order, the Ao Naga religion was based on a system of ceremonies that governed their moral sphere. Their system of ceremonies includes appeasement of boulders, trees, and rivers. The main deities include Liachaba or Lijapa, Longkizungba, and some other lesser spirits. Their social ceremonies include, "Moatsu," "Tsungremong, and the "Feast of Merit." Overall, the Ao Naga religion is what social anthropologists call "Animism" or "tribal religion." Prof Christopher Von Fur Haimendorf was a research scholar from Cambridge School of Anthropology. He was invited by J. P. Mills to study the Ao Nagas in Mokokchung in 1923. During his stay in Mokokchung, Haimendorf accompanied Mills to visit many Ao villages and keenly observe their way of life. Prof Haimendorf was also an ethnographer and had done

26. J. P. Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, Macmillan, London, 1926, p. 215.

extensive work in South India. He observed the Ao Nagas have a clear understanding of life after death. Haimendorf wrote,

> And when a man dies, what do you believe happens to him? The dead--they go to distant land. At its entrance Moyotsung keeps guard; he leads the men who have lived a good life into a good village, but thieves and murderers he sends to a bad place. Men are afraid of him, and therefore, they try to be good.

Haimendorf observed that "Longkizungba" was the sovereign God in the minds of the Ao Nagas. "But Longkizungba, who knows everything, does not care about the name we give him. He looks after you, and he is looking after your wife in the land of the dead, where you will see her again." Dr. Clark was looking for an entry port to the Ao Naga religious belief system. Kijung reported that even before he settled in Molung (Dekaihamong) village,

Clark sought the idea of God among the Ao Nagas. Clark's first Ao Naga hymn was reportedly composed in 1871, when Clark was still in Sibsagar Mission Station. We will come back to this hymn later in this chapter. One can see that early on Clark was keenly interested to enter the Ao Naga social milieu. He enquired about their religious belief.

In the hymn, Longkeezungba the creator of heaven and earth was Jesus Christ in Clark's mind. Clark would have the Ao Nagas who visited the mission bangalow sing the hymn with the Ao Naga traditional attire. One can see that Clark was not willing to transport his own culture into the Ao Naga traditional society. He had respect for the local custom and tradition. He was willing to adapt into their culture and society from the first instance. In fact, when the British entered the Ao Naga territory in 1889, political officers J. H. Hutton and J. P. Mills sought Clark's advice for administration. One of the official documents reported that Sir Pawsey, the Commissioner of Assam, sought Clark's advice if he was in favor of including a part of the present Japukong range consisting of nine villages in the Sibsagar district of Assam for administrative convenience. Clark would not object to such a consideration if he were to make the decision. However, the

Commissioner must have changed his mind and decided to keep the Ao area under the Naga Hills district under the Mokokchung Sub-Division Officer (Civil). We shall now return to our main discussion.

Vernacular Translation

In Chapter V of his book, Professor Sanneh discussed the vernacular mission in detail from pages 122-162. In this section we want to put Sanneh's theory of vernacular mission into perspective. To Sanneh, the local culture was the axis of the mission in the early modern mission period. Thus, in Sanneh's mind, vernacular mission was the same as contextualization. Professor Sanneh made the following observation about the modern Christian mission:

> ...early modern missionaries had followed the logic of the translatability of Christianity and submitted the religion in the most exacting way to the terms of local cultures. By so doing, missionaries became indigenized in the best sense of the term, rather than cultural imperialists. Translation thus brought the Christian mission into original congruence with vernacular demands, with tacit repudiation of Western culture as necessary and universal norm of the gospel.[27]

From the above citation we can make a few observations. First, the mission must be given a specific geographical location at the specific local culture at a certain point of time in the history of religion. Second, by doing so, the mission built up the local culture and tradition, and did not become cultural imperialists. This is one of the critical issues in the mission. Christian mission does not become a liability to the local culture and society. Rather the Christian mission becomes a leverage for social transformation. Third, translation allowed the Christian mission to align the original gospel purpose with the vernacular demand, without imposition of Western culture by implication. Each item as listed above can be evaluated separately to capture the whole meaning of Sanneh's arguments in the future. For the present study, Sanneh made it

27. Lamin Sanneh, Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture, Orbis Books, Maryknool, New York, 2009, p. 124.

abundantly clear in his argument that vernacular mission denotes contextualization. It is to say that we give a drink of water to a Brahmin in India in a Brahmin glass, not a cup imported from England.

Commenting on the Roman Catholic vernacular mission in South India, particularly the work of Italian missionary Robert De Nobili in the 17th century, Sanneh further observed,

> For De Nobili, as for the early Christians, the gospel had not come to uproot but to build upon, not to reject but to renew. He saw Christianity as the flowering of all that was best in India, not the pretext for imposing Western culture on Indians...The refinement he subsequently made to his theology reflected the depth of Indian impact on his thinking. In one matter he continued to defy the India he had learned so wholeheartedly to embrace, and that was the observance of the Mass where he made the Latin formula of consecration over unleavened bread and wine imported from Europe instead of using locally produced rice-cakes and wine made from raisins soaked in water as had been the wont until the practice was discontinued in 1599 (Cronin 1959-146-47).[28]

Augmenting the vernacular mission for contextual theology, Sanneh further observed that the Vatican Council II (1963-1965) brought about numerous experiments and reforms in the life of liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church. Among such reforms, the use of mother tongue in church liturgy was the most prominent one. He stated by saying it had "virtually sealed the undeniable importance of the vernacular in the Roman Catholic Church."[29] Why the vernacular translation played such a prominent role in the church was clearly stated in the Vatican II constitution:

> Liturgical services are not private functions but are celebrations of the Church ...The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by any useless repetitions, they should be within the people's powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation. (SC 26, 34)[30]

To reinforce his argument for vernacular mission, Sanneh also cited the example of the Protestant mission in the Indian sub-continent by missionary William Carey in the late 18th and

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28. Sanneh, *Translating the Message,* p.136.

29. Sanneh, *Trsnslating the Message,* p. 277, Appendix I

30. Sanneh, *Translating the Message,* p. 277.

early 19th century. Sanneh opined that when it came to the missionary frontier, "Catholic and Protestant missions alike pointed to the same direction of the structural adaptation of religious life to align with formative local sources." Here "local sources" refers to the local custom and tradition in Sanneh's mind.

Sanneh stated that the coming of William Carey (1761-1834) to India in 1793 was a landmark in the history of Christian mission. William Carey was known as a "shoemaker missionary," with a humble English Nonconformist background. William Carey occupies a prominent place in the missionary vernacular initiative to Asia and Africa. He was the founder of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 and the London Missionary Society in 1795. Carey understood that the expansion of Christianity abroad should be "something different from the perpetuation of denominationalism or the imposition of Western ecclesiastical forms."[31] It is beneficial to review the work of Indian scholars Vishal and Ruth Mangalwadi to give us the Indian perspective on Carey's impact in the Indian social milieu. Vishal and Ruth Mangalwadi are husband and wife, who have done extensive work on William Carey's legacy in India.[32] The impact of William Carey in India's modernization was so extensive that modern mission scholars in India wanted to know more about this great missionary and his work. Their inquisitive minds were filled with wonder about William Carey and his work in India. On the question of who William Carey was, the Mangalwadis answered in the following words:

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31. Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, p.137-138.

32. Vishal and Ruth Mangalwadi, *The Legacy of William Carey: A Model of the Transformation of a Culture*, Crossway Books, Wheaton College, Il, 199. Vishal studied philosophy under Francis Schaeffer and Ruth graduated in theology from Wheaton College, Illinois. From 1976-83 the Mangalwadis lived and worked with the rural poor in central India. In 1984 Vishal became involved in national politics and social reform, organizing and seeking to empower untouchables and other impoverished people. From 1987-97 the Mangalwadis lived in and worked from Mussoorie, a hill station in the Himalayas. Since then, they have traveled and lectured around the world. Vishal has authored several books on religion and culture. Later Vishal became a fellow of the MacLaurin Institute at the University of Minnesota.

> He was a pioneer of the modern Western Christian missionary movement, reaching out to all parts of the world; a pioneer of the Prostestant church in India; and the translator/or publisher of the Bible in forty different Indian languages. Carey was an evangelist who used every available medium to illumine every dark facet of Indian life with the light of the truth.

It will take volumes to discuss all about Carey's work in detail. However, we get a glimpse through Carey's vernacular translation to see how years later, missionary Edward Clark followed through the same pattern among the Ao Nagas. Prof Sanneh reported that at Serampore, Carey and his colleagues set up a printing press and taught Bengali. In fact, Carey's linguistic research in Bengali contributed to the revival of Bengali literature. Carey and his missionary companions at Serampore took a leading part in establishing Serampore as a major translation center. By 1832, Carey's printing press at Serampore produced religious material in forty-four languages and dialects. Carey's proficiency in Sanskrit was more than enough that he translated the Indian epic poem *Ramayana* to introduce readers to the Indian classics. Prof Sanneh sees that Carey's venture into Indian classical Sanskrit literature like *Ramayan*a was a gateway for the mission to be connected to India's cultural mainstream, and likewise for India to be connected to Christian mission. Sanneh observed: "Christian mission not only penetrated India, but India also penetrated Christian mission and changed its priorities."[33] This statement showed the profound impact in the Indian social milieu. Christian mission was transforming social customs like *Sati* in India. *Sati* or *Suttee* in Sanskrit is simply translated as "faithfulness" in English. *Suttee* was a rite commonly practiced among married women in India in which the wives of deceased men showed their *sati* (faithfulness) by voluntarily throwing themselves onto the funeral pyre of their husbands, and in so dying with them. William Carey with the help of his friend, Sir William Bentick the Lieutenant Governor at Calcutta permanently stopped the S*uttee* system in West

33. Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, p.139.

Bengal around 1832-1833.[34] Carey's social reform is a tempting topic to pursue, but we must stay focused and move on with our main topic of vernacular mission in this study.

It was with profound sadness to report about the tragedy that struck William Carey and his works. The entire translation project was lost in a destructive fire that reduced it to ashes overnight. The Mangalwadis reported on the tragic loss of Carey's translation project in the following quotation:

> This huge fire had consumed Carey's manuscripts along with ten Bible translations. He translated the *epic Ramayana*, which he had translated along with Marshman, was also gone. His huge project of the polyglot Sanskrit dictionary--his *magnum opus*-was now just ashes. Vast quantities of English paper, fourteen fonts of oriental types, new supplies of Hebrew, Greek and English type, priceless dictionaries, grammars, steel punches, deeds, and account books of the property were all gone.[35]

How it must have personally impacted him and his ministry, only Carey can tell sufficiently. Despite such a magnitude of a tragic story, William Carey was found to be even more determined to finish the translation project. Carey resolved that he would take God's word at its face value, that from those ashes he would have a better press and scholarly translations. Carey and his missionary friends were able to salvage the five presses and other resources needed for the project. And thus, within a few months' time, they had opened a long warehouse nearer to the river which was more convenient for transportation.[36]

In modern day, William Carey's vernacular mission was critically viewed in a small section of Indian theological circles. Professor Bobby Frank, a professor of Systematic Theology in Berean Bible College and Seminary in Bangaluru in 1983 argued that Carey might

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34. Sir William Bentick was the Lieutenant Governor of Calcutta Presidency, 1829-1833. We do not know his background of whether he was a Christian. But he was deeply involved in social transformation during his one term tenure in Calcutta. William Carey and William Bentick together vigorously pursued to stop the Sati system in India.

35. Mangalwadis, *The Legacy of William Carey,* p. 61.

36. Mangalwadis, *The Legacy of William Carey,* p.63.

have been complicit, though unintentionally, by engaging too much in classical Indian literature translation. Professor Frank would have liked to argue that the tragic printing press fire incident might have been a red flag to Carey from God to help his servant to focus on preaching the gospel. However, with a careful study of Carey's work and legacy, Professor Frank's observation does not carry weight. William Carey may have experienced many personal failures and human maladies in the mission field. However, one can see, Carey's compelling motive was to transform the society by mission. As one could see, Carey was the central catalyst in India's modernization.

Clark's vernacular mission among the Ao Nagas had striking similarities with that of William Carey's Baptist mission in Calcutta. The difference was that while Carey translated classical Indian literature like *Ramayana*, Clark had to start from scratch. However, the vernacular mission still found the way to enter the local culture and society and made the structural adaptations needed.

Clark's first Ao Naga hymn is given below as was reported by Kijung Ao.[37] As mentioned earlier, this first hymn was composed even before the Clark's entered into the Ao country in 1871.

1. O! kotak kubok alee noong aleer

(O! under heaven living on earth)

Im, temang, keedong, o per,

(All Village, family…)

Tsooboo aga temasheeba tamarenba Longkizungba

(Fear holy majestic "Jesus Christ"

Tetsung sotak Kalummangko.

(...Worship)

37. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 28-29.

2.O! kotak alee, keeboor Longkizungba,

(O! Lord of heaven and earth Jesus Christ)

Aiyim tena meesheemetzu,

(Cry out, not to perish)

Endokdaktsur taie teeazu kalum

(Abandon false worship)

Yangloozang ne noong zoongpoong kalum.

(Creator you are true worship)

3.O! anoong, alee, anu, zeeta, molo tzu

(O! sky, earth, sun, moon, ocean)

Ebatsungda aleer azak

(Those who live in them)

Yanglootsuba, temesuba, zoongpoong Tsoongrem Longkizungba, Tamasuba,

(Creator..true God Jesus Christ first)

Yehova ta.

(Jehova)[38]

Clark also translated the The Lord's Prayer as given below,

Loongkeezingba Yeesoo Kreesta pa nutsung dang ya oda sarasademtsu saiyor. Ozo kotak noong aleeba Obala,
Ne nung temashee sand
Ne akumzuktsu arong.
Kotak noon koda leer, alema azee oda Ne mooloong sa sang.
Ozo noon tanu anoongdand zeengsu kooang.
Ozo taie tokang, kecheearur ozo anuma taie menaba neesoong aben taie ozoa endoker…[39]

Clark's first Ao Naga hymn was sung in traditional tune, with full traditional attire. It was clear that social cultural adaptation was what was at the top of Clark's mind. The first Ao Naga

38. This English translation of the three verses of the hymn is the author's. It felt more like Greek transliteration that took a considerable amount of time to complete. Still far from an accurate translation, it nonetheless gives a good sense of the meaning of the hymn. The word "t" appears to be an incomplete word. According to *Ao Dictionary* by Renthy Keitzar, "ta" is a particle used in reported speech. By itself, the word "ta" has no specific meaning.

39. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 28-29.

Hymnal was published by an Assamese evangelist, Godhula Brown in 1879.[40] The mission vernacular translation became the pathway to enlightenment and thus, to liberty and prosperity for the Ao Naga.[41] The 100-year history of Ao vernacular development is obviously a large field, and there is more than we can possibly handle in this limited study. This field calls for future research studies in the linguistic department. However, for this study we will limit our discussion to Bible translation only. Why was vernacular mission considered so vital at this stage? An intelligent investigation on the above enquiry should lead the reader to understand the impact of vernacular mission in the Ao Naga traditional social milieu. Later, it created a transformational domino effect in the Ao Naga social life and culture.

It has been reported that the Ao Nagas belonged to the "non-literate community."[42] They did not have a written script of their own. The present Ao Naga script was made by missionary Clark with the help of the native leaders. It seemed obvious that the mission was confronted with two concerns in the following order: First, from the mission perspective, they must provide vernacular translation to the natives to communicate the gospel.

The second challenge was determining the sequence in which the natives should learn how to read, write, and do the numbers. The mission chose to teach the natives how to read and write first and foremost. The same question can be asked in a reverse manner. How would the missionaries teach the natives unless the natives first learned how to read and write? This was the

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40. From the *Ao Naga Baptist Church Centenary Album,* 1872-1972.

41. We are familiar with the idea of "Enlightenment" or the "Age of Reason" or the scientific and geographical discoveries in European history. "Enlightenment" also comes in different shapes and forms in different stages in human history. But the outcome of the enlightenment; liberty, and prosperity, seem to be the same all over at different stages in different communities, bearing the same social and cultural impact in modern living.

42. Chubatola Aier, *Talensen Reflection on Education among the Ao Nagas,* Ao Students Conference (AKM), Mokokchung, 2003, p.18.

Kairos moment of truth for the mission.[43] Language study had become a necessity at this point. Dr. Clark and Mrs. Clark had already gained some level of proficiency in the Ao tongue while in Sibsagar Mission Station from their Ao friends, who came to barter their goods to the mission bungalow.[44] No sooner had they settled at Molung, the Clarks actively engaged in vernacular translation. We shall briefly mention Clark's three vernacular translations that became a steppingstone for social transformation in the process. The following publications are in chronological order.

The Ao Naga Primer

As reported earlier, Edward Clark moved in to Molung village (Dekaihamong) in 1874, while Mrs. Clark was on furlough at home.[45] The following year in 1875,[46] Mrs. Clark joined her husband at the new location in Molungyimsen village. The very next year, in 1877, Mrs. Clark published the first *The Ao Primer*. Ben Wati reported that the *Ao Primer* was the book of the basics "A, B, C, and 1, 2, 3, for the beginner." It was a "pictorial" book of just 16 pages with names of common animals like cats, dogs, tigers, and bears, and a small picture of a church

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43. Rev. Dr. Yohanna Katanacho authored and presented the Kairos Document on the Jewish-Palestinian conflict. In his exposition, Katancho challenged world Christian leaders, especially Evangelical leaders, to look at the conflict and take the opportunity to decide in this moment of truth. In other words, the Kairos Document provided world Christian leaders a moment of truth to play their part in it Dr. Katanacho is a Professor at Nazareth Evangelical College in Nazareth. He also teaches at Bethlehem Bible College in Bethlehem. This author along with the DMin cohort had the rare opportunity to listen to Dr. Katanacho in Bethlehem College in May 2015.

44. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 12.

45. N. Toshi Aier, *Ao Arogo Lipok Otsu: Tatalokba Kulitem,* (*The history of Ao Church, Evidence of Events*) Molungyimsen Kaketshir Telungjem, (MLT), Molungyuimsen, 2012, p. 10.

46. Mission reports indicated that 1874 was when Clark took residency at Dekahaimiong. Several local scholars otherwise suggested 1876. However, the debate about the exact date should not antagonize the church family. Historical investigation demands exact dates and locations for its accuracy and authentication of the data material. Nevertheless, the fact that Clark came to our land with the message of the gospel is what calls our attention. In other words, without making logomachy about the exact date we can also gather sufficient information for the main theme of study.

building at the corner inside the cover page.[47] Apart from the spelling difficulties for modern Ao readers, this yeomen work done by Mrs. Clark was admirable. The simple pedagogy of this pictorial book was creative and savvy. In return, this entrepreneurial approach did wonders in the realm of Bible translation.

The Ao Naga Grammar

Following *the Ao Primer,* the Clarks were already engaged in another project. The *Ao-Naga Grammar* was published in 1893. We do not have evidence to support to what extent this publication made an impact and how many copies were made. Nonetheless, this must have been a logical progression from the *Primer* to the use of *Grammar.* The next biggest publication was already in the making and about to be accomplished in just a matter of time.

The Ao Naga Dictionary

The *Ao Naga Dictionary* of 977 words was published by Clark with the help of three Ao-Nagas: Idizungba, Scvbonglvmba, and Kilepalm. This compilation was published in 1911 and printed by the British colonial administration at the Baptist Mission Press in Calcutta. By all accounts this was a monumental accomplishment. The Ao Nagas now had the **Ao Primer, the Ao Naga Grammar,** and the **Ao Naga Dictionary** in their hands. According to Ben Wati, this was the genesis, and therefore, the catalyst of the development of Aoo literature in the following years. Ben Wati observed that these works liberated a people from illiteracy by connecting them

47. Wati, p. 49-50, Aoo spelling in Mrs. Clark Ao Primer is Greek to many modern Ao readers. Still, this was to be celebrated. The was steppingstone for Aoo literature development.

to the modern world. Thus, in the annals of the Ao Naga Bible translation, one can safely say that 1872-1911 was the age of the Clarks.

To support the vernacular mission, we shall reproduce some of the early mission translations. Here is the detailed report of the mission vernacular translation from 1877-1919. Table 1.1 provides a list of mission publications translated to the Ao vernacular by Clark and other missionaries in the field since the beginning.

Table 1.1. Mission publications translated to the Ao vernacular by year

Year	Publication Event
1877	Ao Primer
1878	Dr. Clark wrote the Catechism
1882	Clark translated Matthew's Gospel.
1883	Clark published the first Ao Naga hymnal
1884	Clark wrote the Life of Joseph
1885	Clark translated John's Gospel
1893	Mrs. Clark completed the Ao Naga Grammar
1902	Dr. S. W. Rivenburg translated the Acts of the Apostles
1906	Clark revised the Gospels of Matthew and John
1907	Rev. W. F. Dowd translated Mark's Gospel
1907	Mrs. Clark wrote *A Corner in India*
1908	Rev. Dowd translated I Corinthians
1911	Clark published the Ao Naga Dictionary
1914	Mrs. Enid S. Smith translated James and Jude
1918	Rev. R. B. Longwell and Dr. W. C. Smith translated Genesis
1919-1929	Rongseniken, an Ao Naga, translated the first New Testament

Source: Ben Wati, *Aoo Kaketkeno Lipok Juri Otsu Kaket,* Mokokchung[48]

From the list above, one can make two key observations: first, the early mission's focus was vernacular mission. It was made clear that the main purpose was to present the Scripture to the natives in their "own mother tongue."[49] Secondly, following the vernacular mission's

48. Wati, *Aoo Kaketkeno Lipok Juri Otsu Kaket,* Mokokchung, 2011 p.2.

49. The focus of the ABMU ministry was to present the scripture to the natives in their own tongue. Clark wanted sure that their main purpose was to "preach the gospel." But to present the gospel, the native must have easy

strategy, from day one, almost every year, the mission published one book of the Bible or other related Christian literature material. In the meantime, the missionaries could not remain idle in learning the Ao language for themselves. They must have been acquiring language proficiency by now. It has been reported that all the American missionaries after being in the mission field for two years spoke Ao fluently. Rev. & Mrs. Bengt I. Anderson were missionaries at Impur Mission Station from 1936-1948. Kijung reported that even after they returned home in 1948, the Andersons preferred to write and communicate with the missionaries at Impur in Ao.

We shall now turn our attention to two distinct stages of the vernacular mission in the following pages. From the ensuing discussion, we shall see that the goal of the early vernacular mission was aimed at the Bible translation project. As the "Wycliffe Bible Translator," William Cameron Townsend has observed, to hand down the Bible to "every tribe" in their own tongue must have been the compelling motive for Bible translation.[50] As Townsend further observed, this was a "God-given task" which must have been the task for the American Baptist Mission as well. For the Ao Nagas the story of God's good news[51] must be conveniently available in their own mother tongue. It was only a matter of time that the Ao Nagas will have a Bible in their hands in their own tongue. In the process, the Ao Nagas who were the receivers became the very owner of

access to the printed materials at hand. Soon, this question will become a strategic point for Ao Naga mission. We will further discuss these strategic issues in the next chapter 3.

50. *Tribes, Tongues and Translators, Perspectives, on the world Christianity,* p. 327, Pasadena, CA, 2009.

51. The two English words ``good news" are translated in one word as *Osangtajung* in the Ao dialect. This translation is reflected in the current Ao Naga hymnal, known as *Osangtajung Ken*, ABAM, Impur, 2016. One can see that this translation follows a contextual pattern rather than word by word translation. In Ao dialect, the word "Osangtajung" is a conjugation of two words, "osang," and "tajung." Literally, osang means "message," and tajung is "good." You text a message to a friend on your device, not news, which will become news eventually. This could have been translated as the message of the good news. This will make sense with the maker of the Message Bible Eugene Peterson. Peterson has an idea that God has a message for all the people of the world. His message of salvation is to give his life to us, so we may live an abundant life (John 10:10). The call to declare this message is included in the message itself. "The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God is near, Repent and believe the good news." (Mark 1:15-16).

the Christian mission. In the span of thirty years, the Bible translation was making a tremendous impact. The Ao Nagas belonged to the category of oral tradition. They did not have their own written script. The mission provided them with the script with the Roman alphabet. As pointed out above, the publication of the *Ao Naga Dictionary* by Dr. & Mrs. Clark in 1911 laid the foundation for Bible translation in the later years. Clarks' *Ao Naga Dictionary* would become a treasure hunt for the Ao Naga litterateur to draw their wealth in the future. This indeed was an extant historical document.[52]

The First Phase of the Bible Translation Project

How did the Bible translation all come about? The coming of the complete printed Ao Naga Bible was the story of relentless effort by a group of people who were involved in the project. It was a time-consuming effort. The Bible translators encountered political hurdles and economic hardship in the process, but they were determined to complete their project well done. The vision that the Ao Nagas must have a complete Bible in their hand was finally accomplished. In the end, it should not matter the length of time this group of translators took to complete the Bible translation. What really mattered to them was that the mission was accomplished. It appears that there was no greater value than the Bible translation project in the minds of the mission. At the pioneering stage, the mission must have encountered enormous responsibility. Yet the mission's

52. In 2013, the *Ao Senden Literature Board* first revised and published Clark's Ao Naga Dictionary. This revised edition was a long overdue. The publisher decided to keep one of the controversial letters **v** in lieu of the letter **u** from Clark's work. This decision was significant. The use of the letter **v** in lieu of the letter **u** will not be necessarily important for today's Ao readers. Yet the publisher retained Clark's original letter. This decision however indicates that Clark's original literary work was so important in the minds of the publisher. Since they did not have their own writings, they must know the etymology of every letter of the word for future literary development. Rev. Dr. Mar Atsongechanger, the General Secretary of the ABAM shared his gratitude to missionary E. W. Clark for the priceless *Ao Naga Dictionary.* He was more than thankful to Lanunungsang, the chairperson of the ASLB and his team for making this revised Ao Naga Dictionary publication possible.

focus was on this one thing on top of their priority list. The Bible translation was the cardinal story of the mission among the Ao Nagas.

Prof. Sanneh reported that the vernacular Scripture translation has occurred in 2,000 languages and dialects, but the complete Bible has appeared in only 443 languages in the years between 1456 to 2007.[53] The Ao Naga Bible happened to be one of those 443 projects and was completed in 1964.[54] Today people in North America enjoy the privilege to have multiple versions of the Bible. The New International Version (NIV) was most recently revised and published in 2011 for better understanding of the word. The English Standard Version (ESV) was also revised and published in 2016 for the same purpose to give the readers a better sense of the word. The same idea was true for the Ao Naga Bible translation project, but entirely in a different historical setting. Today, translators would have the resources necessary and the intellectual property to undertake such a strenuous task of Bible translation. Putting all available resources together would make the Bible translation a lot easier than it would have been in the previous centuries. However, in the late 19th and early 20th century one can imagine, the Bible translation would have been a somewhat different story. The human resources were limited, and the insurmountable language barrier was inevitable. This was precisely the case for the complete Bible translation project for the Ao Nagas. The demand for Bible translation was increasing, but the supply was found to be running far short at all levels of human resources and financial assets.

As cited above, the first Ao vernacular translation of Matthew's Gospel appeared as early as 1882. Just eight years after Clark took residence at Molung village, Clark translated the gospel

53. Sannah, *Translating the Message*, p. 283.

54. Ben Wati, *Khristan Takum* reported that the United Bible Society waited for several years before they included the Ao Naga Bible in their project. Ben Wati was excited that in 1954, the United Bible Society accepted the Ao Naga Bible in the project. This must have been a great encouragement, particularly for Ben Wati and for all those who were working on the translation project.

according to Matthew in the Ao Naga vernacular. Soon, it was followed by the second vernacular translation when Clark translated the gospel according to John in 1885. It took more than twenty years to revise Matthew's and John's Gospels, originally published by Clark in 1906. Soon after, the gospel according to Mark was translated in 1907 by Rev. W. F. Dowd.[55] There were sporadic translations here and there, but our record indicates that it was not possible for a complete Bible translation for nearly fifty years. This was hard to explain why the work was so slow, but we can see the challenges the Bible translation project was encountering along the way in the following discussion.

Despites challenges on the way, a steady work of translations was in progress. As a result, the translation of the Ao Naga New Testament was completed in 1929 under the native leadership of Nokdenlemba. Under the leadership of missionary Dr. C. E. Hunter at Impur Mission Station, the New Testament was revised and published in 1949.[56] During this period, the translators had to sort out the Ao Naga spelling controversy. This spelling controversy stems from two different spoken dialects- Chungli and Mongsen among the Ao Nagas. Our record indicates that the spelling controversy continued to persist, but it was to be seen that such local issues did not deter the Bible translation project.

A new day was dawning for Bible translation. The United Bible Society was aware of the wishes of the Ao Nags to have the complete Bible translated into their own mother tongue. The United Bible Society wanted to ensure that to distribute the Bible to their people, the people should have the right attitude and faith in the word of God and understand that the word of God is the most important thing in the world today. They wanted to let the Ao Nagas know that the United

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55. Wati, *Aoo Kaketkeno Lipok,* p.22.

56. Wati, *Khristan Takum,* p.2.

Bible Society understood that there is nothing which is more important than the teaching of the Bible. Thus, the United Bible Society encouraged the Ao Nagas above all to love and observe the word of God. Once the United Bible Society was convinced that the Ao Nagas fulfilled the wishes of the Society, they were willing to undertake the project for a complete Ao Naga Bible translation in 1954. The United Bible Society must have been delighted to grant the funding for the translation project of the complete Ao Naga Bible. True to their word, the Society included the Ao Naga Bible into their current project.[57] As Prof. Sanneh reported, the Ao Naga Bible translation was completed in 1964.[58] We will elaborate on the question of why it took ten years to complete the project later in this section.

Here we will formally introduce a prominent Ao Naga litterateur, Dr. Ben Wati, the man who was responsible for the printed complete Ao Naga Bible in 1964. Ben Wati's firsthand experience with Kilep and other Ao Naga pioneers in the field of literature who worked hand and hand with Clark and Mrs. Clark validate his account. As we shall see, Ben Wati was not only a pioneer in the field of literature, but he was also one of the pioneers of Christian education among the Ao Nagas. Thus, his contribution will not be confined to the field of literature alone; we shall see his contribution in the field of education.

Ben Wati was a second generation Ao Nagas Christian leader. He traced back the genesis of the Ao Naga literature to Dr. Edward Winter Clark and Mrs Mary Mead Clark, the first missionary couple among the Ao Nagas.[59] Ben Wati was the founding president of the Evangelical

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57. Wati, *Khristan Takum,* p. 2.

58. Sanneh, *Translating the Message,* p. 288.

59. Wati, *Aoo Kaketkeno Lipok, Juri Otsu Kaket, History of Aoo Literature, a personal account.* translated by the author of this study.

Fellowship of India (EFI) in New Delhi and was a world Christian leader on par with Dr. Ralph D. Winter in American evangelical circles. Upon his death, the *Nagaland Post*, the most read newspaper in the state, and in entire Northeast India, issued an editorial statement on June 14, 2012 in the following quotation:

> Born on December 18, 1920, at Impur to Late Imchaba and Late Kariben, Late Rev. Dr. I Ben Wati passed his matriculation (1st division) from GHS Shillong in 1940, passed IA (Inter Arts-1st division) from Cotton College, Guwahati, in 1942, passed BA from St. Paul's College, Kolkata, in 1944, BD (1st BD among Baptist in NEI) from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, USA, in 1948, MA (1st Naga MA) from Wheaton College, USA, in 1949, DD (1st from NEI) conferred by Wheaton College in 1970, co-founder of Eastern Theological College, 1949-1953 with Rev. Dr. J.W. Cook, ordained as a Baptist Minister in 1973 at Impur by Ao Baptist Church Association (ABAM) and president of World Evangelical Fellowship (Now World Evangelical Alliance) 1969-1974, retired but continued ministry in counseling, Bible teaching and writing. Late I. Ben Wati was also a member and founder of various institutions during his lifetime.[60]

The Second Phase of the Complete Bible Translation Project

Our records indicate that the second stage of the Bible translation work was mainly carried out by the native leaders; a clear distinction from stage one where vernacular translation was primarily done by the missionaries. As mentioned above, Clark started vernacular translation from scratch. Folklore would have us believe that the Ao Nagas lost their script to a hungry dog. But the Aoo literature itself would later prove that this event would not have stopped them from developing a literature of their own by the mission. Edward and Mary Clark adopted Roman letters and introduced the Ao spoken language into a written form. Our records indicate a clear transition of leadership in the field of Bible translation. American missionaries were still active in the field until 1955. But long before their exit, the native leaders were actively involved in the Bible translation project. As noted above, three native leaders were with Clark for a whole year in Darjeeling, assisting the final production of the Ao Naga Dictionary in 1911. They were Idzungba,

60. *Nagaland Post, A Tribute to I. Ben Wati*, p. 2, June 14, 2012

Scvbonglvmba, and Kilepalvm. Clark duly acknowledged their support and dedicated the Ao Dictionary to them. [61]

As pointed out earlier, from the start, the mission vision was to translate the entire Bible into the Ao vernacular. Ben Wati reported that thirty-five years later the translation of the Ao Naga New Testament was completed in 1929 by two native translators named Rongsenneken and Mayangnokcha. One can argue that thirty-five years was a long time to translate the New Testament. However, one should acknowledge the fact that this was a transition period from the American missionary to the natives. For this reason, the time taken was fairly understood. Twenty years later, the Ao Naga New Testament was revised with the help of missionary Dr. C. E. Hunter (1948-1950) at Impur Mission Station[62] and was published in 1949. About the same time, the translation of the Old Testament into Ao Naga was completed in 1951 under the able leadership of Mr. Nodenlemba from Waromung village.

As we shall see later in our discussion, the contribution made by Mr. Nodenlemba in the field of Bible translation can hardly be overlooked. Ben Wati informed us that by 1951, the United Bible Society had already offered to help publish the complete Ao Naga Bible and by 1952, the work was already in progress.[63] The translators could not not have hidden their

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61. Clark's spelling of these three names is markedly different from today's Ao spelling and may appear to be awkward to the readers. One should know the fact that during Clark's time in North America and elsewhere in Western Europe, the letter "v" was used in lieu of "u." It is not clear when the change was made from the use of "v"to "u" in Aoo literature. Later, we find that spelling confusion became a controversial issue in the process of the Aoo literature development. Attempts were made by several scholars in the field of literature, but the spelling confusion persited. But the Ao Senden Literature Committee was able to set aside the controversial part and move on. This was a breakthrough in Aoo literature development. There is hope for Aoo literature in the future to be an upgrade to the level of university study.

62. It is important to note that there were several mission stations that existed in several locations. Kohima Mission Station, Wokha Mission Station, and Sema Mission at Lumami.

63. As of today, as was in 1952, the *Bible Society of India* was located at 206 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore, currently named as Bengaluru. It was not clear Ben Wati has a certain influence in Bible Society, because he himself did not mention. But given the fact that Ben Wati lived in Mysore, just 3 hours away from Bangalore, he must have been instrumental for the translation work to be done in Bible Society.

excitement with this glaring hope of their Bible. Ben Wati mentioned that the United Bible Society had translated some portions of the Bible into 1,100 languages of the world thus far. Among them only in 200 languages the entire Bible was translated at that time. He reported that by then, the translation of the complete Bible was in progress in 38 languages and the Ao Naga Bible was one of them.[64] The complete printed Ao Naga Bible was published by Ben Wati in 1964. As indicated above, one wonders why it took so long to publish the complete Bible. There could be several reasons for this delay. Two world wars must have disrupted the work in progress. The impact of wars was a worldwide phenomenon. Arnold Toynbee's, *Advance Studies in History* was published in 1959. In the introduction, Toynbee reported that his manuscript was completed in 1945, but the uncertainty caused by WWII interrupted the publication. Toynbee lamented that his manuscript had to be safely transported to New York for publication.

The political unrest in the whole region must have interrupted the work of editing and publishing the complete Bible. World War I ended in 1919, but 20 years later, World War II started in 1939, and it ended in 1945. A major battle took place in Kohima, the present state capital of Nagaland during World War II. The Allied Forces put a full stop to Japanese aggression in the Battle of Kohima. Consequently, the Japanese were barred from searching for their lost in the region. It was only in 2015 that the government of India openly allowed the Japanese to look for their dead in the fields of Kohima. The battle was a decisive victory for the Allied Forces. It was much to be celebrated, as it was the defeat of Japanese imperialism and hegemony in Southeast Asia. The monolith in front of the World War II Memorial Cemetery in Kohima reads: "When you go home, tell them of us, for your tomorrow, we gave our today." The writing on this monolith is the most fitting tribute to celebrate their sacrifice.

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64. Wati, *Kristan Takum,* Senti Kaket Yimyim, Oxford, 2007, p. 2.

The Ao Nagas accomplished their goal to translate the complete Bible into their own mother tongue. The "Temeshi Lai"[65] or the Holy Bible was published in 1964.[66] While the Bible translation was the main goal, a few other literary works sprang out during the period under review. As one can see, these literary works were a corollary to the Bible translation. We shall briefly report on three pieces of literary works led by the native leaders.

In Ben Wati's mind, vernacular translation was closely associated with the development of Aoo literature. He shows us five different eras of Aoo literature development alongside Bible translation. Ben Wati divided the process of literary development into 5 significant periods as follows: [67]

1) 1872-1911: the Clarks' period: the genesis of Aoo literature
2) 1912-1929: Rongsennuken's period: taking deep root.
3) 1930-1950: Imnameren's period: the blossoming
4) 1951-1972: Nokdenlemba's period: the fruit bearing
5) 1972-2010: Renthy Keitzar's period: sophistication and confusion

A few words are needed about the confusion over Aoo spelling during the period between 1972-2010. Ben Wati observed that with the development of their vernacular, the Ao Literature Committee was faced with the challenge of choosing a spelling system stemming from two versions of spoken dialects among the Ao Nagas before missionary Clark arrived. Although this period is outside of the current study, it is important to note that this confusion was harmful for further development of Aoo literature. At the same time, this period also provided necessary ground for future research development of the Ao vernacular study on the graduate level.[68]

65. Wati, *Khristan Takum,* p. 2.

66. Wati, *Aoo Kaketkeno Lipok,* 2011. P. 68.

67. Wati was describing the detailed survey of Aoo literature up to 2010, but the scope of this study is up to 1955.

As cited above, the years 1912- 1929 were the time of digging deep roots of Aoo literature. The evidence cited above also indicates that during the period from 1930-1950, Aoo literature received a new impetus under a visionary Ao Naga named Imnameren of Changki village. In this section, we will briefly introduce two pieces of publication that were produced during the period under review. These two publications were not a part of the Bible translation, yet they were a corollary to Bible translation.

Khristan Takum

Khristan Takum, by Ben Wati could be translated literally as **"Christian Life"** or it could be translated as **"Christian Living."** [69] Dr. Ben Wati was the founder, proprietor, and chief editor of *Khristan Takum,* a non-profit religious publication. The first publication of *Khristan Takum, Vo. No, I* was published in November 1954. Ben Wati published *Khristan Takum* for the Ao Baptist Churches Association (ABAM). What was the main line of thinking for this publication? What were the aspirations of the Ao Nagas? What might have been one thing the proprietor wanted to convey through this publication? These enquiries will help us better understand the basic philosophy for the publication of this masterpiece of Ao vernacular literature. In the mind of Ben Wati, knowing the Scripture is vital. You now have the Bible in your hands; you must read it to understand the word of God and practice it. At the same time, it takes time to put that knowledge of the Bible into practice in real life. To Ben Wati, it might

68. Wati observed that this was a necessary grinding period because it allowed the scholars to go to their roots and discover their rich cultural heritage. He emphasized that the force for a community to move forward is to know "who we are" and "what we are." Ben Wati greatly admired the American author Booker T Washington's writings. He admitted that when he read Booker T Washington's writings, he could not stop but read with many "tears." The author taught him the principal ways to liberate the community from their own bondage. After reading Washington's writings himself, Ben Wati encouraged the young generation Ao Nagas to read all the writings of Booker T Washington.

69. All the translations in this study are mine.

have been true that it takes a long time to travel from the head to the heart, though it may be just one foot of distance.

What really prompted Ben Wati to establish *Khristan Takum* was simple. To encourage every Ao Naga to own a Bible and read it regularly. As reported earlier, the revised second edition of the Ao New Testament was published in 1949 under the supervision of Dr. Hunter. The Old Testament was completed in 1929. It appears that Ben Wati was discouraged by the tepid attitude among the Ao Naga Christian to read their Bible at home. In the first publication of *Khristan Takum* page 3, November 1954, Ben Wati reported a staggering statistic of readership among the Ao Naga Christians. According to his report, church membership was 19, 568 in 59 village churches under the *Ao Baptist Church Arogo Mungdang (ABAM).* It means, 19, 390 could read their Bible at home. As indicated, this statistic was drawn from 59 village churches within the Ao country. But there were diaspora Ao Nagas who lived outside of the Ao country beyond the Dikhu River, many of whom went as missionaries among other tribes.

Moreover, to this point, all other tribes mentioned elsewhere used the Ao vernacular Bible in their churches. They became familiar with Ao vernacular.[70] The point here is, the number of Ao Naga Christians who could read their Bible obviously could have been much more than what the statistic was showing. In the same report Ben Wati cited that even if he were to take a minimum number, at least 20,000 copies of the Bible would be needed for the Ao churches if everyone read their Bible. In 1949, ABAM literature department printed 10, 000 copies of the Ao Naga New Testament. Five years later, in November 1954, there were 3, 698

70. During the month of March 1980, the Ao Baptist Church, Kohima invited several delegates from other tribes like Sangtam, Phom, Konyak, Chang, Yinchger, and Khimungan to join their special world mission celebration. All the delegates from other tribes shared their reports in fluent Ao. Many young generation Ao Nagas in Ao Baptist Church, Kohima were fascinated when they heard other tribes speaking fluently in Ao. On the other hand, these young generation Ao Nagas could not speak their mother tongue. The fact of the matter is, the churches among other tribes grew to a sustainable level by themselves. Thus, by the 1950s, the ABAM encouraged them to establish their own church association, and many of them did so.

copies still in the bookstore. In five years, only 6, 302 copies were sold. So many unsold copies of the Bible might have been surprising to Ben Wati's expectation. He must have realized that there was almost a total lack of enthusiasm to read the Bible among the Ao Naga Christians. Ben Wati lamented that the church family would become weak where there is lack of enthusiasm to embrace the word of God. But Ben Wati was not deterred by people's poor attitude. He was even more determined and doubled down the effort for Bible translation. In Ben Wati's own words,

> Tejen Lai kodang adoktsu ta kanga yonyateper, saka aiben tabensaba atadang mabensaba suitemer. Anungji taruba 1955 nungbo Khristan kibong shia aser tamager shia Lai alitsu nukjidon yudi, aser Tejen Laiji madokdang Tasen Laiji terben to mesuaka anabenbosa zunger atadi.[71]
>
> (We look for the translation of the Old Testament with great anticipation. But often, while waiting for perfection, imperfection will soon pass away. Therefore, let us have a vision that in the next year 1955, every family and every believer will own a Bible. Let us make a new decision to read the New Testament at least ten times before the Old Testament comes) [72]

From the above citation, Ben Wati's vision for Bible translation was unabated. This was the prime motive of the publication of *Khristan Takum,* to encourage the Ao Nagas to read their Bible at home. The author of *Khristan Takum* also had in mind Christian influence in the daily world. Our Christian behavior should reflect our faith in the resurrection. So that just as Christ was raised from the dead "we too may live a new life." (Rom. 6:4) To Ben Wati, Christian life refers to one's testimony as a Christian in one's daily world situation. In other words, we experience the power of God who raised Christ from the dead in daily living. Ben Wati reported that in the 1950s, there was still a sizable portion of the population who were non-Christians among the Ao Nagas.[73] It sounds like a cliche, but in the 1950s the social conduct of a Christian

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71. Wati, *Khristan Takum,* Nov. 1954, p. 5.

72. Translation is by this author. I must have confessed that this translation was like Greek transliteration to me. The author followed a contextual approach rather than word by word literal translation.

or "believer" would have been drastically different from a non-believer. Although a believer would do the same thing as everybody did in the village, she/he would be different in the sense that a believer would represent someone bigger than themself. Careful examination of *Kristan Takum* reveals that the author was deeply motivated by Christian influence in the real world. Thus, *Khristan Takum* was aimed at attempting to enhance the spiritual influence of the Ao Naga Christian in their daily world.

Daily Bible Reading

Ben Wati could not have emphasized enough the importance of Scripture reading in a believer's life. They must read and meditate the Scriptures daily. To Ben Wati, feeding on Scripture daily was as obvious as eating three meals a day for spiritual sustenance. He emphasized that as we eat three meals a day to sustain ourselves physically, we too should feed on the word of God for spiritual nourishment. The author observed three things that help us when we read the Scripture. It opens our eyes (Lk. 24:31). It opens the Scripture to us, and thus we are open to the Scripture. (Lk. 24:32). The Scripture opens our hearts to understand it (Lk. 24:45). We discover three new things about us in the Scripture. We are a new creation. (1 Cor. 5:17) We have a new law, the law of love (Jn 13:14). We belong to a new city of Jerusalem[74] (Rev. 21:2).

Ben Wati also emphasized the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It appears that he wanted to clear up certain confusion about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Scripture among the Ao Naga Christians at that time. To understand the concept of the Holy Spirit, Wati returned to the

73. In those days, the term "amangbapur" was used for believers. "Amangbapur" is plural. The singular will be "tamager." The term "limapur" which is also plural, was used for non-believers. The non-Christian was called "limapur." Limapur literally means those belonging to the world. In the present context, it could mean those who follow their old ways of life.

74. Wati, *Khristan Takum*, p. 1; Vol I, No I, November 1954.

Scripture to tell stories of salvation from the beginning. God became human means, God with us (Jn 1:14). He died on the cross means, he was transformed and became like us (Phi. 2:7). He ascended into heaven means, God is for us (Jn 14: 3). On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down which means God lives in us (Acts 2: 1-4). Ben Wati further observed the function of the Holy Spirit in the Scripture as follows. From Genesis to the birth of Jesus, the Holy Spirit was Creator (Gen 1:2). The Holy Spirit inspired the prophecy (2 Pet 1:21). The Holy Spirit empowers men and women with knowledge and salvation (Exo. 31:1-3).

The Holy Spirit was the giver of wisdom, understanding, and all kinds of skills.[75] The Holy Spirit is closely related to Jesus' life and ministry. Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:18-20). Jesus's public ministry was dedicated by the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:16). From Pentecost to the Second Coming of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit is to guide the believers into all truth (Jn 16:12). By the power of the Holy Spirit Christ offered himself as a sin offering (Heb 9:14). By the power of the Holy Spirit God raised Christ from the dead (Rom. 8:11). There is truth about personal life, family life, the church, money, power, politics, social life, culture, and society. The children of God are led by the Holy Spirit in all truth.

Ben Wati continues. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit gave birth to the church and brought all believers to become one in the Spirit (Acts 4:32-35). In conclusion, the author pointed out by saying that we are living in the age of the Holy Spirit. He further observed that from Genesis to the birth of Jesus, the Father was in charge; from the birth of Jesus to the ascension, the Son was in charge; from Pentecost to the end of the age, the Holy Spirit will be

75. In Exodus 31:1-11, described the account of the two skillful persons, Bezalel, and Oholiab. "I have filled them with the "Spirit of God", with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship…"

the person in charge of the church.[76] On the whole, the purpose of *Khristan Takum* was indeed to strengthen the Ao Nagas to live a life worthy of the gospel. Unfortunately, *Khristan Takum* was short lived. After just six years, the publication abruptly ended in December 1960. The records provide no indication why *Khristan Takum* was shut down rather abruptly. This study found 14 books by Ben Wati to review, but curiously enough we could find no information on this question of why the *Khristan Takum* ceased to be published. Nevertheless, *Khristan Takum* was a powerful tool to strengthen its readers. The Ao Nagas could not have appreciated enough the author of *Khristan Takum*. Expressing their deep appreciation and gratitude of the Ao Naga Baptist Churches Association, chairman, Nokden wrote the following letter to Ben Wati on December 6, 1954,

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Wati:
As directed by the Ao Naga Baptist Churches Association held at Asangma village, Nov. 4-7, 1954, I am exceedingly happy to have the privilege of expressing the joy. and sincere gratitude of the whole congregation to you for producing Khristan Takum, the first religious paper in Ao which you have offered as a gift to the Association free of charge and labor for the first issue.

May this paper bring much spiritual blessings to all the Ao Churches and individuals here and abroad as we work together and nurture the life of this paper in the years. to come."[77]

Yours in His Service,
Nokden, Chairman
On behalf of the Ao Naga Baptist Churches Association

Comparatively, *Khristan Takum* was short lived. But the content was profound and must have impacted individuals and the church family for many years to come. A researcher can produce a thesis out of *Khristan Takum* itself. However, for the sake of time and space we will leave such a task to the future researchers in the field.

76. Wati, *Khristan Takum,* p. 3, Oxford, 1954.
77. Wati, *Khristan Takum,* Inside cover page, 2007.

Similarly, it has been observed that the emergence of the indigenous Naga political movement was closely associated with the vernacular translation. In the 1950s, political propaganda was circulated in vernacular in every village. The Ao Nagas were literate enough to read their basic information. This use of vernacular must have awakened the Ao Nagas' political consciousness. Since this subject is political in nature, we shall leave it to the researcher in the concerned department of political science. We shall turn to the next literary work in Ao vernacular during the period under review.

Ao Milen

Ao Milen, translated as "Ao's torch" in Ao dialect,[78] implied that this piece of literature would carry the torch of enlightenment among the Ao Nagas. This must have been the vision and the aspiration of the *Ao Milen.* According to Ben Wati, the *Ao Milen* was first published in 1937 by the *Ao Student Conference* (Ao Keketshir Mungdang). Formerly *Ao Milen* was called the *Ao Naga Messenger.* [79] It is interesting to note the line of thinking that was involved in this change of title. The insignia of *Ao Milen* was a muscular arm holding a torch out, within a star. Perhaps this insignia symbolized the shining growth in the field of modern education among the Ao Naga. We do not know exactly what was in the minds of those who changed the name and came up with this symbol. One can only infer and say that the change of insignia represented the aspiration of the people to see the light of the modern world. The time had come for the Ao

78. The translation is by this author. The vision of *Ao Milen* was to give light in the darkness. What kind of darkness they were thinking about? The darkness of not having the knowledge of the kingdom of God. The gospel of the kingdom of God was the light for the Ao Nagas. At the same time this knowledge of the kingdom was made known through the literary work of women and men. In Ao, light means "tesangwa" from darkness. The light has the power to cast out the darkness.

79. Wati, *Aoo Kaketkeno Lipok,* p. 33.

Nagas to leave behind their distant past and look ahead to the future. This torch should become an inspiration for progress and advancement. Dr. Ben Wati reported that Mr. Imnameren from Changki village and his colleague Mr. Luke Sosang were directly responsible for the establishment of *Ao Milen.* Earlier Imameren had expressed his vision to translate the entire Bible into Ao vernacular. He also expressed his intention to translate books on other subjects like health care, spiritual life, etiquette and manners, history, geography, and the dictionary.

Ben Wati reported that to implement all these progressive ideas, the Ao Student Conference appointed a committee, with Mayangnokcha as chairperson from Changki village and Yajenlemba as Secretary from Mopungchuket village. Thus, the Aoo Literature Committee was first established in 1944 at the Ao Student Conference at Longjang Village.[80] The contributions made by Imnameren to Aoo literature are more than we can cover in this study. Imnameren was a visionary and gifted. He empowered himself for the task of Aoo literature development. Today local scholars cannot complete their studies without taking a serious look at the contribution made by Imnameren. Ben Wati lamented at the demise of this young visionary at a young age. That it was hard to find someone who would take the place of Imnameren. His untimely demise was an incredible loss for further development of Aoo Literature. From the writing of his peer Sashimeren Aier, one can see that Imnameren was a source of inspiration to all his contemporaries. A portion of Sashimeren's poem in memory of Imnameren, in Ao vernacular was translated into English by Tzuknung Penzu as given below:

> Land of heroes, Ao Land, from the long ancient age,
> Even though our country was not worthy of them all,
> Like the tree-top hornbills, heroes roamed with prestige,
> But to the porch of the Lord, they assembled one and all,
> Imnameren too gone, to the far unseen realm,
> Where the brave worthy souls gather in Hall of Fame,
> His life so brief in this world, oh like a daydream,
> Great welcome for him beyond, where his presence felt by all….

80. Wati, *Aoo Kaketkeno Lipok,* p. 36.

Will there be someone here, to carry thy mission?
To refill thy high seat, there's no one worthy of thee,
Like the Pole Star in the sky, guiding Naga nation,
Countless stars in the sky, outshining them all thou be.
Messenger of Jesus, Supongwati's son,
From Changki village soil, land of worthy sons,
Among them Imnameren a begotten son.
Born to lead the Naga tribes, but we missed the light of thee… [81]

Imnameren was indeed a source of inspiration in the history of Aoo literature. We join the host of others to admire this talented individual. Today his legacy in the annals of Aoo literature lives on after he is long gone. At first glance, *Ao Milen* appeared to be like a typical newspaper such as *Nagaland Post*, or *Times of India*, or *The New York Times.* Ben Wati called it a "Magazine."[82] The front page contained what appeared to be important news of the week, from other parts of India and around the world. The editorial column was found on the second page. On the third page was found important local news. *Ao Milen* was not a local Christian Magazine like "Decision Magazine" by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.[83] Rather, it was a conventional newspaper that was based on Christian values and principles. It was published every Monday for 76 years, from 1935 and was stopped in 2011 for a while. However, recently in 2018, *Ao Milen* was resurrected and started publishing again.

One can imagine that every happy Monday morning, people were looking forward to reading *Ao Milen*, and informed by the honest news that mattered to them in daily living. Among the close-knit social life like that of the Ao Nagas, reporting "*fake news"* would not have been an issue. This must have been the vision of the leaders who envisioned and started the *Ao Milen.*

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81. Wati, *Aoo Kaketkeno Lipok*, p. 40-41.

82. Wati, *Aoo Kaketken Lipok,* p. 33.

83. *Decision Magazine,* St. Paul, 1960.

The *Ao Milen* turned out to be a monumental success story in the annals of Ao literature. Within 25 years after Clark first published the *Ao Naga Dictionary,* the Ao Nagas were up and running a full-fledged newspaper in their own dialect. This was remarkable progress. Thus, Ao literature had entered a new era of flowering toward progress and advancement, a new culture and society different from the previous traditional society. The *Ao Milen* played a pivotal role to liberate Ao Nagas and bring them into modern living. The next literary work called, *Lanur Teimla* published by Tsuknung Penzu on behalf of the *Ao Christian Youth Endeavor* (CYE) was primarily focused on youth ministry.

Summary

A summary would be necessary for the above discussion. We see that the early challenge for the mission was enormous among the Ao Nagas. The language barrier looked insurmountable at first. Moreover, the missionary must first teach the Ao Nagas how to read and write in vernacular. The reality was that the Ao Nagas did not have a written script of their own. Thus, vernacular translation became inevitable for the mission. *The Ao Naga Primer* was the first literary work produced by Mary Mead Clark in 1877. The basic idea must have been how to write and read A, B, C in vernacular. *The Ao Naga Grammar* produced by missionary Clark in 1893 shows that the literary work was in progress. More effort was made in the process to produce a much bigger volume of *The Ao Naga Dictionary in 1911. The Ao Naga Dictionary* offered a new milestone for the missionary translation.

The vernacular translation of the books of the Bible and other related Christian literature materials were to be found from the very beginning by missionary Clark and other missionaries at Impur Mission Station. True to their conviction, the Bible translation was the main stay for the

mission both in phase one and as well in phase two. Clark's literary work became a foundational structure and launching pad for the Bible translation. By 1929, the Ao Nagas had translated the entire New Testament into Ao Naga vernacular. In the words of Sanneh, this was what is called, "mission by translation." Thus, in Sanneh's opinion, the mission translatability and adaptability was found in the Ao Naga local culture and tradition. Sanneh also observed that the missionary translation in the native mother tongue gave rise to a new social order in Africa and some other parts of the world. This was likewise true among the Ao Nagas in the coming days.

As we have seen during our discussion, Ben Wati was instrumental for the printing of the complete Bible translation, called "Temeshi Lai" in Ao vernacular.[84] Ben Wati's vision for evangelism was to present the Bible to each family member in the Ao Churches and beyond. The work of Bible translation went through harrowing hardship inflicted by the Naga political crisis and the anxiety and uncertainty caused by the two world wars earlier, but it survived, and the mission was accomplished. The local leaders beat the odds and the complete printed Ao Naga Bible was available by 1964. Ben Wati founded the *Khristan Takum,* as a corollary to the Bible translation in 1954 to support the Ao Naga Christians in their walk of faith.

We also have seen another two pieces of literature, corollary to Bible translation; *Khristan Takum* and *Ao Milen* during the period under investigation. The *Ao Milen* was supposed to be a secular local newspaper. Nevertheless, it was guided by Christian values and principles. Thus, by vernacular translation, Christian mission entered in the Ao Naga cultural and social milieu. In the words of Walls, the translation of the Bible "revealed Christ in a new way" within the Ao Naga culture and tradition.

84. Wati, *Khristan Takum,* Vol. I, Nov. 1954, p. 2.

CHAPTER THREE

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING

In this study, the vernacular mission was like planting the seed in the soil of the Ao Naga social milieu. The spread of modern education was the beginning of growth of the mission. If the seed was planted in the locality, the mission sprouted and grew like a tree in the culture. In the ABAM Museum at Impur, a portrait of Godhula Brown, Supongmeren, Clark, and Mrs. Clark hangs on the wall. The impression was that the Assamese evangelist, Godhula Brown, the Ao Naga Supongmeren, and the missionary couple were a team. They were in it together as depicted as a picture of partnership in the mission. I will elaborate a little more on evangelist Godhula Brown's life and ministry shortly.

In this chapter we will focus our discussion on the spread of Western education. The coming of Western education was the door into the modern world. Eventually every Ao village had a mission school and a local church planted. The main purpose of the mission school was to raise pastors and evangelists and go out to preach the gospel to the neighboring villages and beyond. Thus, early on the mission school became synonymous with evangelism and church planting. The mission school had a profound impact in the cultural realm. The mission school transformed the social structure of the Ao Naga traditional society.

Supongmeren was believed to have been the first Ao Naga from Dekaihamong village to have met Clark in Sibsagar Mission Station in 1869. Supongmeren must have been so mesmerized by Clark's teaching in the school that he invited Clark to come to his village and teach their children how to read and write. Kijung reported that at that time, to avoid the

pandemic and the famine in Dekaihamong and the surrounding Ao Naga villages, Supongmeren went down to live in Sibsagar Mission Station. Clark was eager to learn the language, so he decided to appoint Supongmeren to teach himself and Godhula Brown. Within a year Supongmeren became an interpreter between the Ao Nagas and Clark. In this way, he was not only a teacher but became a mediator of the good news of the Kingdom of God and a leader among the natives.[1] Supongmeren became a resourceful person for the mission in his village. He was instrumental in bringing Godhula Brown and missionary Clark to Dekaihamong village. In one of his early visits to Dekaihamong, Godhula Brown was suspected of being a spy for the East India Company. But Supongmeren explained to the village elder's council that Gohula was not a spy, but a friend.

It should be noted here that during the Clark era (1872-1911), the vernacular translation was limited to a catechism and several books from the New Testament. However, after the tumultuous years of World War I, we saw that the Bible translation found a new impetus under native leadership. We saw native leadership in Bible translation projects throughout the period under review. The year 1964 was an important landmark in the history of Ao Naga vernacular Bible translation. As reported earlier, though the Bible translation was started in 1929, due to the unavoidable circumstances of great world wars and the Naga political unrest in the region, the Bible translation was completed only in 1964.

Yet vernacular translation was only a necessary first step to lay the foundation for wider evangelism and church planting. In the Clark era, the ABMU could not have expected full-scale evangelism and church planting. However, once it was in progress, the vernacular mission was

1. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen.* Gauhati, 1972, p. 24.

becoming a steppingstone for the next target of evangelism and church planting. In other words, the literary work must have prepared the mission to put evangelism and church planting processes into motion.

The Role of Native Leaders

Here the role of native leadership for the success of evangelism and church planting cannot be underestimated. The mission school was followed by the formation of a fellowship of those who became the party of believers.[2] The mission strategy was to plant the seed of the good news of the Kingdom in every Ao Naga village. The early missionary Clark and other missionaries visited Ao Naga villages, contacting the elders of the village. Following the Apostle Paul's pattern, in every village, two or three people or one family gathered and formed a small church. There, a church building would be erected for worship hour on Sunday. The Aonokpu (Nokpo Imjen) Baptist Church Centenary Souvenir, 2006 indicated that their first church building was reportedly built in 1932. It was conveniently located in the center of the village. The villagers raised the funds for this building project. It was a magnificent building so different, made with a tin roof, whereas the bamboo hut was the existing dwelling place in the village. Their church building was a source of inspiration and hope for the village community.[3]

Today the entire population of the Ao Nagas who live in the Ao land are Baptist Christians. There are minority groups like Hindus and Muslims and some other groups who live

2. There was tension between believers and non-believers in certain villages. There was also tension between believer villages and non-believer villages. Later, as the gospel spread to other tribes, the tension broke out between the tribes.

3. Growing up there, this author distinctly remembers going to Sunday School in the morning, attending worship hour with mom and dad, and attending child evangelism in the afternoon on Sundays. Looking back to the childhood days and reminiscing the experience in the village, it was a memory of fun and great joy to go to church every Sunday.

in Ao land who are not necessarily Christians. But these minority groups are a very insignificant number compared to the indigenous Ao Naga population. There was no other denomination in Ao land except the Baptist Christian during the entire period under consideration.

Like a fish following the water, church planting followed evangelism among the Ao Nagas during the period under investigation. In our storytelling, as much as we are impressed by the work of the ABMU, we do not hear much about the contribution made by the native Assamese evangelist Godhula Brown in the early pioneering stage of the Ao Naga mission. A brief report about Godhula Brown's ministry at the early pioneering stage among the Ao Nagas would be appreciated here.

About Godhula Brown's Early Ministry in the Ao Naga Hills

First, a brief note about a native Assamese evangelist named Godhula Brown. He was a worthy friend of the Ao Nagas, and one should give due recognition for his services among them in the early days of the mission.[4] Kijung Ao reported that Godhula Brown was one of the early converts among the Assamese. He was a promising young man who served as a teacher in the Majuli Island in Assam but returned when pressure from the Hindu majority was too strong to endure. He joined Clark at Sibsagar Mission Station as an evangelist. He was an interpreter between Clark and the Ao Nagas who came to the mission bungalow for bartering.[5] His name was best known as Godhula "Babu" among the Ao Nagas.[6] It was believed that during time,

4. The name "Godhula Babu" for Godhula Brown was popular among the Ao Nagas then. Hence, we shall use both Godhula Babu and Godhula Brown interchangeably wherever it is appropriate from this point in this study.

5. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 24.

6. "Babu" means "sir" in English. The Nagas called Godhula "Babu" out of respect. The Ao Nagas called Clark and other missionaries, "Sahib" also has the same meaning "sir" in English.

Brown acquired a significant proficiency in the Ao Naga dialect. It was also reported that Brown had a beautiful voice that made him effective in preaching.

A story was told about evangelist Brown's encounter with the headhunters on one of his early visits to Ao country. Kijung observed that about this time, it appeared that the Ao Nagas were very sensitive about the influence of the British colonial intrusion into their turf. In such a vulnerable situation, apparently, evangelist Brown must have been suspected of being a colonial spy. One day, he was rounded up by the villagers and was in grave danger of losing his life. If his instinct was right, Brown started singing the hymn, "Nearer my God to thee. Nearer to thee" in Ao vernacular. At that moment, a lot of things must have been running through Brown's mind. Only Godhula Brown would know the state of mind he had been through. Whether he was intending to somehow present the message to the villagers or to merely save his own life, only heaven can tell. However, an unexpected turn of events changed the whole situation for good. Brown had barely finished the last verse, then the arsenal of weapons raised against him were found lying down on the ground. Nobody knew what had happened. Suddenly, a pin-drop silence was prevailing on the scene. Later, that evening, Brown was welcomed in the village. He was singing in front of the whole crowd in the village square that evening.[7]

The above story had a sequence of events to substantiate. As we have reported in Chapter Two, Clark sent Godhula Brown to explore the Ao country prior to 1872. After six months of stay in the Ao Naga Hills, evangelist Brown brought 9 converts from Dekaihamong village to Sibsagar Mission Station. Clark baptized the new converts in November 1872 in Sibsagar Mission Station[8]. The subsequent event shows that upon return to the village they found there

7. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p.31.

were 16 more converts in the village. More can be said about the circumstances that led Brown and Clark to come to Dekaihamong village for the first time for Clark. There was no substantial evidence to show that Clark had visited Dekaihamong or any other village prior to this visit in Ao country. But the only circumstantial evidence we have for the compelling reason for Clark to go with evangelist Brown along with the nine to Dekaihamong village was to join these 16 converts. Clark baptized the 16 new converts in Dekaihamong village on December 23, 1872. Their names are as follows:

1. Svbonglemba (Suponglemba)
2. Kilepsangba
3. Zongkongkvmzvk (Imkongkumzuk)
4. R. Kemzvangba (Kemzungba)
5. Arenzvangba (Arenjungba)
6. Pangnem
7. Imna Miri
9. Zongribai
10. Zikaba
11. Mopoimba
12. Takazungdang
13. Imlinokshi
14. Imlichiba
15. Kilemsangba
16. Imnanoker (Lokland).[9]

8. It is not clear, but possible that evangelist Brown and Clark both accompanied the nine new converts to their Dekaihamong village immediately after they were baptized in Sibsagar Mission Station.

9. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 39.

On December 23rd, 1872, the 25 baptized members, including 9 members who were baptized a month earlier at Sibsagar Mission Station, established a church at Dekaihamong village and celebrated the Lord's Supper. According to Kijung this was the first American Baptist Church in the Ao Naga Hills, as well as the first Baptist Church in Nagaland. This would become the microcosm of evangelism and church planting by the ABMU throughout the period under investigation.

Clark and Godhula Brown were friends of the Ao Nagas. The Clarks' first encounter with the Ao Nagas was in the Sibsagar Mission Bungalow. The Ao Nagas came pleading with the Clarks to "buy their goat." It must have been an extraordinary scene for both parties; the Ao Nagas might have never seen a white American missionary before. Mrs. Clark acknowledged that this was the first time she met with the Nagas. She commented that the Ao Nagas carrying javelins and knives and their attire woven with women's long hair points to the fact that they were from the headhunters' nation. Mr. Clark observed that the Ao Nagas were half-clad and unhygienic, but they wore flower earrings woven with cotton to demonstrate that the Ao Nagas were "lovers of art and beauty." This friendly attitude must have attracted the headhunters to the mission compound. Aware of the headhunting practice in the Naga Hills, earlier Clark was believed to have said to them that he would rather keep his head on his body, not in front of their house.[10] This comment could have been taken humorously, however rude it appears to be at first instance. Clark was expressing his own doubt about the headhunters. Yet, his curiosity about the Ao must have increased the urgency in Clark's mind to go to visit the Ao Naga villages.

10. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 21-23.

One can see that tension between the missionary zeal and earnestness in the eyes of the Ao Nagas was brewing to a degree for something far greater than the mission could have anticipated in the short run. Meanwhile, the Ao Nagas could not have imagined anything at all at the moment. As cited above, Clark took residence at Dekaihamong (Molung) in 1874, and later he moved to a new village called Molungyimsen in 1876. It would have been then that Clark took on extensive village visitation, with Godhula Brown accompanying him as an interpreter on the visits. By then the Deputy Commissioner's office at Sibsagar district headquarters in Assam identified several villages in the Ao Naga Hills before Clark moved into the hills. Within a period of ten years, Clark visited almost all the Ao villages including big villages like Longkhum, Ungma, Longsa, Chuchuyimlang, and Mopungchuket on the far south of Molungyimsen.

It is more than a little uncertain what Clark did in such a visitation with minimum knowledge of the Ao vernacular. The interpreter was present all the time with Clark, but one must expect that conversation with the village elders was limited. Imagine sitting in the company of headhunters: his safety and wanting to keep his head on his shoulders must have haunted Clark's mind all along. It must have taken tremendous courage and boldness. For Clark, the vision to the region beyond must have been realized in such an acute manner. A firm decision was required now.

The intention was clear to bring the good news of the Kingdom. However, owing to the limitation presented by the language and other cultural barriers, preaching in the village would not have been an easy task. There is no evidence to show that Clark was preaching on the street. Instead, he met with some of the elders of the village, making friends with them. This was the wisdom that was endowed to this pioneer missionary. There is no evidence showing that Clark

was kicked out of the village. Instead, he was warmly welcomed to every village he entered. It was not clear what the message Clark preached, but in every village, he visited, he found people were responding: sometimes a small group of people, a family, and sometimes just one person. Where there were two or three gathered, a small church was set up and was entrusted to the locals.

The First Stage of Evangelism and Church Planting

With the coming of Rev. Perrine and Rev. Haggard to Molungyimsen Mission Station, the Home Board approved the request made by Clark along with Perrine and Haggard to incorporate the mission school as part of the evangelism and church planting. We shall explore this subject in the following section. From the records left by Clark, it appeared that evangelism and church planting went hand and hand at the early pioneering stage and continued throughout the period under investigation. In his book, Kijung relied more on Clark's records than he relied on Rev. Perrine and Rev. Haggard's records. Perhaps it was because both Perrine and Haggard left the Molungyimsen Mission Station just after one term of four years.

It is interesting to note that there was hardly any information about how the villages were evangelized in the first place at this stage. It was understood that during Clark's visitation to these villages, he must have contacted persons in every village he visited. Later on, Clark's records indicate that invitations were coming from those villages for the baptism of new believers in the village. Wherever two or three or more gathered a church was planted. The record indicates the following churches were established during 1872-1905 by the mission in Ao Naga country based on Kijung's work.

1. Merangkong Baptist Church

It appears that Godhula Babu was sent to Merangkong (Nowgong) village. In the spring of 1881 Godhula Babu baptized seven new converts and formed Merangkong Baptist Church in the summer of 1890.

2. Dekaihamong Baptist Church

The story of Dekaihamong village church is a conspicuous one. There were silent years in Dekaihmong village from 1872-1892. However, several new converts came forward and expressed a desire for a new beginning. On February 28, 1892, three new converts were baptized and celebrated the Lord's Supper. Several members, including Rongsenchiba and his wife Tongpangkokla, and Tsvknungtoba from Yajang village established a new Baptist church in Dekaihamong.

3. Yajang Baptist Church

On February 26, 1888, a ten-member team was sent out from Dekaihmong village and formed a new Church at Yajang village. Clark mentioned in his report about a godly woman named Tongpangkokla, or Tongpangla as she was usually called, who had been taught by Mrs. Clark and served under her as a schoolteacher. She was also taught the scriptures by Rev. Rivenburg and was known as the "Bible woman." When Clark was on furlough, Mrs. Clark persuaded Tongpangla to join her husband at Yajang village to teach at the school. She taught

there for three years and established Yajang Baptist Church with her husband. The Bible woman, Tongpangla died on September 7, 1893 at Yajang.[11]

4. Wamuken Baptist Church

Three Wamuken men were reportedly examined by Clark and by Puna Nath, an Assamese schoolteacher from Sibsagar Church. These three men were found worthy to be baptized. They were baptized by Clark on Dec 31, 1893 and observed the Lord's Supper. These three men, Tsuksemnuken, Lemzungchiba, and Makenlepden, formed the Wamuken Baptist Church.

5. Lirmen Baptist Church

This early church at Lirmen was significant. Kijung, the first Ao Naga who became the General Secretary of the Ao Baptist Church Association in 1932 was from Lirmen village. This would suggest that as a boy in the village Kijung might have learned some useful information about the church that was established in his village in 1898. Such information would determine who, which year, and how the good news of the Kingdom arrived at his village. However, Kijung did not address these questions.

Instead, Kijung reported that the following persons were baptized by Rev. Zilli, another Assamese evangelist from Sibsagar church[12] in the presence of Rev. F. P. Haggard on October 16, 1898, and observed the Lord's Supper: Imnayotang, Imolangba, Nukshilemla, Takatiba,

11. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen*, p. 81-82.

12. Rev Zilli was an Assamese schoolteacher from Sibsagar Mission Station. It appears that Zilli came to know the personal salvation grace while he was teaching in School in Asangma village. He was converted then. Unfortunately, we do not have much information about evangelist's Zilli and his work.

Mayang Tumba, Tongbangluba, and Imtinangbung. Some delegates from Yajang Baptist Church, and Impur Mission Station together with newly baptized members recommended and voted to establish Lirmen Baptist Church on October 16, 1898.[13]

6. Longpa Baptist Church

Our records show that Longpa Baptist Church was founded on November 13, 1898, with the following three newly baptized members: Arabang, Tebuba, and Ribasang. Rev, Zilli, and Rev. Haggard were present, and they served the Lord's Supper.

7. Akoia Baptist Church

The Akoia Baptist Church was established on November 21-22, 1898 by Rev. Haggard with the following newly baptized members: Imnanok, Kohakchiba, Chiptaksangba, Livi Babu, and his wife Sarah.[14]

8. Waromung Baptist Church

Imti Onen was a schoolteacher in Warumong village since 1899. Imti Onen was the contact person. It is understood that Imti Onen was instrumental in inviting Clark and other delegates to baptize certain new converts. The delegates from Molung (including Clark) and Impur Church found 12 new members who were worthy to receive baptism. Clark baptized them and served the Lord's Supper on March 6, 1901 and established a new church there.

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13. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p.83.

14. Clark did not mention Livi and his wife Sarah, but they must have been the schoolteachers in Akoia village. Often it so happened that the Assamese schoolteachers sent from Sibsagar were not believers yet. During their service in the villages, they accepted the good news of the Kingdom and were baptized and included in the church membership.

9. Asangma Baptist Church:

Clark's record shows that Subunger began work in Asangma in January 1902. It is not clear whether Subunger was a schoolteacher or a pastor in Asangma. He introduced 11 candidates for baptism. An official church was not yet set up, but it was obvious that believers met there for worship in Asangma village.

10. Chungliyimsen Baptist Church

On January 4, 1903, Rev. H. B. Dickson baptized the following persons in Chungliyimsen village: Lolenkaba, Longkoksenla, Imjensang, Aosangla, Kilensungba, Imenagla.

11. Nokpo Imjen (Aonokpu) Baptist Church

In 2006, Nokpo Imjen (Aonokpu) celebrated the centenary of their church. Their centenary report accurately matched Clark's record about how the church was established. It was reported that Kariluba heard the good news of the Kingdom preached in the next village, Lirmen village. He was baptized by Rev. Perrine in Warumong on November 24, 1903 but fell back to his old opium habit. Later in January of 1906 Takutuba of Warumong was sent by the mission to take care of the school in Aonokpu village. By then, there were sixteen new believers in the village. Their names are as follows, written in the Centennial Monolith erected during the jubilation celebration on December 15-17, 2006: [15]

15. *Aonokpu Baptist Arogo Centenary*, 2006, p. 121.

On January 16, 1906, the following people were baptized by Rev. Dowd and established the Aonokpu Baptist Church: Longerijang, Makenshilu, Sentinunga, Tsvbungsangba, Chilaksangba, Pangerangla, Sajunbgla, Majangnaro, Tekanaro, Imsangla, Rebasangla, Tekesengla, Nokjasangla, Kajenla, Karimenla, Nyngsangwala, Merangkala, Kiramila." "Grandpa" Makenshilu was appointed to be the first native pastor from Aonokpu village.[16] Noknawaba, the son of Makenshilu told the story that his father Makkenshilu was illiterate. He knew only two hymns by heart, which he learned from the missionaries. At the Sunday worship service, if he sang one of the hymns at the beginning, he would sing the other at the end of the worship service.

With two of his teenage daughters, Makenshiulu traveled two days risking their lives from tigers and bears to Asangma village to attend the Ao Baptist Church Association annual meeting in 1906. We were told that Rev. Dowd and other missionaries were so moved by Makenshilu's simple faith that they paid him one rupee, which would be worth about 50 cents at that time. This was not the salary but a deep appreciation for his simple faith. Rev. Dowd also gave "grandpa" a gong and instructed him to ring the bell every Sunday morning for church service. Later, the grandchildren of Makenshilu tried to retrieve the gong given by Dowd in vain. Oral stories from Aonokpu village have us tot h ink that the believers there were still a minority group in the village. Most non-believers called "limapur"[17] in the village would often be

16. Today, the distance from Aonokpu village to Lirmen village is about 15 kilometers or 10 miles. One can walk this distance in roughly three hours. The oral story informs us that in those days there was intermarriage between the two villages. If we were to believe the oral story, as it was told in the early days, Lirmen people were reaching out to the people at Aonokpu with the good news of the Kingdom. However, the response from Aonokpu was that the new religion would bring a plague to their village. Often, those who accepted the good news were quarantined outside the village. It would be appropriate at this point to admit that the author of this study happens to be the grandson of the said "grandpa" in the text above, Makenshilu. He was one of the first baptized members of Aonokpu and became the first native pastor from Aonokpu village. To reciprocate their generosity, the author came to the USA as a missionary to acknowledge and say "Thank you" to the American people for bringing the good news of the Kingdom of God to us.

gathered outside the church building and watch what they were doing during the Sunday worship hour. This went on for a year until almost the whole village, about 2000 in population, became Christian at the end of that year. Persecution was reported in the village from "limapur" to those who became Christians. This archetype of conversion centered around the community living of Ao Naga was the driving force throughout the Ao land and beyond.

12. Longsa Baptist Church

Longsa village is located at the border of Sema country and Sangtam country. At this early stage, to have a church established in Longsa village was quite significant. It would indicate that the message of the Kingdom was far-reaching. On January 29, 1905, Rev. Dowd baptized Ongersangba and Alemtusba from Longsa, at Impur Church. This must have been the seed of the Longsa Baptist Church.

13. Longjang Baptist Church

Today, Longjang village is about an hour drive from Impur Mission Station, the headquarters of the Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang (Association) (ABAM). On September 3, 1905, Rev. Dowd baptized three members at the adjacent village in Longpa Church. Their names are, Nvkenchiba, Takasangla, and Takatola.

Thus, one can see that early on evangelism and church planting was rapid. Within years after Clark's arrival at Dekaihamong, the number of churches was gradually but steadily growing. Though the number was just a handful, the church was making history.

17. The term "limapur" literally means those who belong to the world; those who are not in the sheep pen.

According to Kijung, by 1898 the baptized believers' population in 13 churches in Ao land was 177. One must note that the church members reported were only baptized members. There must have been other "believers" who had not been formally baptized but attended the church. There were six schools with 194 students in all.[18] No record of church statistics was found from 1899 to 1919.[19]

The Second Stage of Evangelism and Church Planting

We shall now turn to the second phase of evangelism and church planting. The second phase of evangelism and church planting came from the mission school and healthcare services. This was the major movement that brought the structural changes in the society. We will leave the significance of the transformation to the next chapter. In this chapter we will focus our discussion on the motive of the mission school and the medical services. What motivated Clark, Rivernburg, Perrine, and Haggard for a mission school? How did they translate their vision for evangelism into action? The answers to these questions will form the main discussion of this chapter.

As discussed in phase one, it was clear that from the beginning Clark had his eye on the people of the Naga Hills. In his own words, "It is certainly painful for us at Sibsagar to be unable to lift our eyes without seeing these hills and thinking of the men on them who have no knowledge of Christ."[20] The compelling motive in Clark's mind was reaching those "who have no knowledge of Christ." But the question was how this message would be translated into the

18. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 76.

19. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 94.

20. *Minutes of the Jubilee Conference of the Assam Mi ssionary Unions,* December 18-29, 1886, p. 25-26

minds of those unreached people. The mission school and medical mission were effective tools for evangelism and church planting in the second phase. As noted above, fundamentally, the mission school was to train pastors, teachers, and evangelists to take the knowledge of Christ to other villages and tribes beyond the Ao land.

Mission School and Evangelism

This part also can be called the spread of Western education in the Ao Naga Hills. The subject of mission schools or the native educational training program requires a fuller discussion. In this section, we will explore the extent of the spread of Western education among the Ao Nagas. The introduction of Western education was a "path" and a "light" to a new way of living in a society of the developed world.[21] For the Ao Nagas, the claim that the mission provided a new way of living is an understatement. In fact, the mission school was responsible for social transformation.

What was the mission's motive? Kijung observed that the purpose of the mission school was to spread the good news of the Kingdom.[22] The Ao Naga traders who frequented Clark's mission bungalow in Sibsagar pleaded with him to come and teach their children how to read and write. This must have impressed Clark from day one.[23] Yet in his mind, preaching was a set priority. Clark worked through the tension between preaching the Gospel or running the mission schools. Early on as a missionary, Clark was confronted with this dilemma. A change of mind

21. *Talensen, Rflections on the Education Among The Ao Nagas,* Mokokchung, 2003, p. 2.

22. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 104.

23. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p.104.

must have taken place in Clark for him to ask the Home Board for funding of the mission schools for the native education training program in the greater purpose of evangelism.

However, Clark's request for the mission school was delayed for nearly 10 years by the Home Board. But the request from the mission practitioners in the field could not be ignored for long. It appears that the Home Board was willing to amend the mission policy to incorporate mission schools for the purpose of evangelism among the Ao Nagas and beyond.

According to McFayden, the first school in Ao Naga Hills by Clark was started at Molungyimsen Village in 1878. In his letter to the Home Board, Clark wrote, "one day school taught by Godhula and one night by me. Mrs. Clark is just attempting a girl's school."[24] Initially, Clark was confronted with two challenges: the need for trained teachers and the need to make vernacular textbooks. In the beginning, the village school teachers were Assamese. In this situation, running the village school in Assamese would have been easier. However, Clark decided to make a vernacular textbook. As we have seen in chapter two, this meager step led to the full-grown Aoo literature development later.

It appears that in the early 1890s the mission made a major shift toward the native education policy. With the coming of Rev. & Mrs. P. P. Haggard (1893), the native education received a total makeover. The early mission disposition was to "preach the Gospel." This mindset came from the Gospel itself. The Kingdom of God has come and was preached in all the villages. Then, miracles accompanied the Gospel preaching. Thus, driving out evil spirits and healing the sick were the signs of the presence of the Kingdom of God in the world. (Mark 1).

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24. Dr. Narola Ao McFayden, *Traveling in time with Pioneers of our Faith,* published by CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016, p. 88.

As mentioned above, Clark's time devoted contributing to the literary work and the primitive circumstances in which he was living did not permit him to lay a strong foundation for the education of the Ao Naga children. Due to the lack of a coherent educational training program, Clark's mission school was underperforming and was criticized by Rev. Perrine and Rev. Haggard in the 1890s. They openly criticized Clark's educational endeavors by saying that there was "no real Clark's mission work worthy of mentioning among the Ao Nagas."[25] Rivenburg, who relieved Clark at Molungyimsen during Clark's furlough in 1886-87, reported on the condition of the mission schools at the beginning of 1886 in the following words:

> Of schoolwork little has been done personally. The Native school teachers have been the source of no little anxiety. During the year six schools, five for boys and one for girls have been left open for one hour in the early morning before the people go to work. This schoolwork has been very unsatisfactory owing chiefly I think to the little time spent in the school. How to better the system is an unsolved question. The people are very poor and cannot afford to give their children their time to be spent in school for which they see so little or no use. If the children are paid (there is no money to try it this year) for their time, a very bad system will be inaugurated from which it will be difficult to break.
>
> Our teachers save one Assamese. The present system will not give competent Naga teachers for the future. I trust Mr. Clark will return with plans and a spirit to make these schools a success. I believe there is an immense amount of nonsense talked about Christianizing heathen savages, at least, without giving them secular schools to make the work permanent. I am the last to want to do schoolwork. In fact, I do not intend to do it. As soon as I can I desire to give the whole of my time to preaching. But someone must teach schools and make books, or our work will be transitory or vain… [26]

The main point of the report was focused on the unsatisfactory situation of the mission school that needed to be addressed. However, we should point out that the wish to improve the mission's school system was a legitimate desire. At the same time, to criticize Clark for a poor school situation may not be fully warranted. Clark had been in Molungyimsen for just ten years, (1876-1886). Ten years is long enough one could argue; at the same time given the situation

25. Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Mission in Nagakland: A Study in Historical and Eumenical Perspective,* Calcutta, 1984, p. 80.

26. Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Mission in Nagaland,* p. 78.

Clark was in, ten years might not have been enough time to develop a good running school among the natives. Moreover, Clark did not have the mission policy in place for the mission school at the beginning. So, Clark's primary focus had been preaching. More importantly, Clark decided to focus on vernacular translation to have the natives read and write in their own tongue.

However, the subsequent events led to some drastic changes in the early 1890s in the field of mission schools. Puthenpurackal reported that with the coming of Dr. & Mrs. P. P. Haggard (1893) and Rev. & Mrs. S. A. Perrine (1894), something began to take shape that came to be regarded as an absolute necessity, namely the need for "some sort of educational system for the Nagas," who were in the words of Perrine "so ignorant and so unlettered."[27] A "radical measure" was necessary to reform the mission school in the Ao country.[28] In January 1894, the field director in Molungyimsen, Rev. Rivenburg wrote to the Missionary Union: "At present, there is no part of our work that is so important to the success of our work as this school work." The letter indicates that in Rivenburg's mind mission school was synonymous with evangelism and church planting. He must have been convinced that the mission school must be the priority. The letter also clearly expressed the reality in the mission field. In the next four years, the mission school showed an encouraging improvement. The Ao Baptist Church Association *Minutes* recorded six schools in the Ao country, with 194 students total in 1898.[29] With this

27. This kind of raw comment was not uncommon among the missionaries. Elsewhere the missionaries accused the natives of being "lazy" or having "no ability" to learn. However, this kind of comment would have been more of a cultural issue, rather than a social reality. The Ao Nagas had their own learning system, called *Ariju*, or *Morung*. Moreover, it has been said that the Ao Nagas enjoyed economic self-sufficiency within their own social system. The economic system was locally produced and consumed. Furthermore, our evidence suggests that the Ao Nagas picked up the literary works and developed their own literature once they were exposed to the Western idea of education. The discussion in this chapter will cover most of these issues raised in this footnote.

28. Toshi, *Ao Arogo Lipok Otus*, Molungkimong, 2012, p. 21.

29. According to the *ABAM Minutes Report,* Rev. Perrine was the secretary of the second Ao Baptist Church Association annual meeting at Impur.

much anticipated improvement on the mission school front, there were signs of relief and new hope for the native educational training program. Optimism was growing in the mission circle. On an optimistic note, Rev. Perrine wrote to the Executive Committee, Missionary Union on his teachers' training program in 1899,

> The work of the Training School has made some very long service this year in advance of that of former years. The interest in education has grown, the school is on a much firmer basis. Self-support is nearer, we have a better house and apparatus, and some are ready to go out to overcome the world--not thoroughly prepared, you must understand, but relatively prepared for their life work.[30]

We can make several observations from Rev. Perrine's letter. First, the letter shows a sigh of relief in the minds of the missionaries in the field. If the Executive Committee of the Missionary Union was not sure whether the schoolwork was the right move for the mission, this letter must have assured them that this was indeed the right move for the mission.
Second, the letter indicates that things had started taking shape on the ground. The interest in education among the natives had grown, and the school was on a firmer basis. The native education program ensured the Ao Nagas would learn to read and write, so the gospel could be communicated to them. At the same time, a question may be raised: what if the Ao Nagas refused to attend the mission school? On the contrary, the Ao Nagas showed growing interest in education. There was regular attendance in school, and truancy declined.

Third, there was hope for "self-support" in the near future. In this situation where the mission was the entrepreneur on the educational front, they had to provide everything for the native education training program. To support natives for their education training might have been the basic instinct for the mission. But the mission also knew that in the long run, the natives should support themselves. The mission would not have wanted to create a situation where the

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30. Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Mission in Nagaland,* p. 111.

natives would become dependent on the mission. The mission must have thought about how to raise the awareness for self-support among the natives. In this case, within four years of the running of the native educational training program, the mission could see the potential to make it a self-supporting initiative. In other words, the Ao Naga Christians were willing to support themselves for their own education training program.

Fourth, there was a better house and apparatus. This could mean a classroom with benches for students and a chalkboard, and perhaps, the vernacular textbooks for the students and the teachers. This meager looking mission school environment was a good start.

Fifth, and most importantly the mission's main goal, to raise pastors, teachers, and evangelists among the natives, was about to become a reality. This last point, to raise pastors, teachers, and evangelists among the natives was the main emphasis of the mission school. The fact that some of the native students were ready to go out to preach the gospel in the neighboring villages supported this goal. Obviously, the Ao Nagas were not fully ready yet for the task. Nevertheless, the native leaders were coming along and getting ready for the master's use to preach the gospel in all other villages. This letter was a brief field report that aptly described things happening on the ground. The Home Board could not have been happier to read this report. This report also formed the motive of the mission for the native educational training program for many years to come among the Ao Nagas and among the other Naga tribes.

As time passed, however, the quality of the mission schools was a serious concern to the Birtish Colonial Administration. Officials complained that the mission schools should improve the curriculum for teacher training. Apparently, the mission was aware of the problem and had a plan to address the issue eventually. This was brought to the attention of the Missionary Union at home by another prominent education missionary at the Impur Mission School, R. B. Longwell.

Longwell reported this on the condition of the village schoolteachers in 1911. "The teachers bring in their monthly reports, have little to say about their work, get their money, and go back. Their work is rarely inspected, and their classes seldom examined."[31]

In the first place, Longwell's report only validates the British Colonial Administration's legitimate concern. This concern might have come as an eye-opener and at the same time an opportunity for the mission to fix the problem in a timely manner. As cited above, preaching took the pre-eminence of the mandate in the Gospel account. The healing miracles were the evidence of the presence of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, the missionary's purpose was to go to the field and preach the Gospel first and foremost. This is how the mission mindset was formed, and this is what the missionaries were supposed to do when they went out to the ends of the earth.[32]

Therefore, the mission schools had shown slow but steady progress during the years 1901-1920. So far, the mission schools along with preaching the Gospel and other daily duties were carried out by lay missionaries. Thus, the need for a designated education missionary was long overdue at Impur Mission Station. Early on, Dr. Clark asked the Missionary Union to find an education missionary, but he was not successful. Finally, Rev. and Mrs. W. F. Dowd, the first designated education missionary couple, arrived at Impur Mission Station in 1901. Since then, scores of designated education missionaries began to arrive at Impur Mission Station. Miss E. G. Miller (1905-1907), Rev & Mrs. R. B. Longwell (1905-1922), Dr. & Mrs. W. G. Smith (1912-1915), Miss E. M. Stevenson (1918-1924), Miss E. Masales (1919-1926), Mr. & Mrs. Suppllee (1920-1921), Miss A. Geisenhener (1923-1926).[33] From the list of above designated education

31. *Puthenpurakal, Baptist Mission in Nagaland,* p. 112.

32. McFayden, *Traveling in times,* p. 2.

33. *ABAM Centennial Album,* Impur, 1972.

missionaries, it was abundantly clear that the Home Board was serious about the mission school. This would be yet considered another mission breakthrough among the Ao Nagas.

Rev. Dowd considered mission schools as the "most effective means for establishing the Kingdom of God among these people," and the students as the "best way to get the gospel into a heathen village." Even so, shortly after his arrival, Dowd was appointed as Secretary of Mission Schools for entire Assam. This visionary education missionary was popular not only with the missions but was recognized by the British Colonial Administration as well. On more than one occasion, the Director of Education of Bengal and Assam sought his advice on the native educational training program in the Naga Hills.[34] Our records indicate that on May 18, 1906, the Lieutenant Governor of Assam appointed Rev. W. F. Dowd, an American Baptist education missionary at Impur Mission Station to the position of Honorary Inspector of Schools in the entire Naga Hills District of Assam under the British Colonial Administration. The Dowds successfully served at Impur Mission Station for 20 years (1901-1921) and returned home.

At this point, the mission schools appeared to be still in a formative stage. The Clark era, 1872-1911, laid the basic framework for the mission schools and the native educational training program. The next phase, the Rongsennuken era (1912-1929) was the age of sprouting deeper roots for the mission schools and the native education development program. The mission understood that to be successful, the schools needed the necessary investment in the project at this stage. They needed to build infrastructure. Nonetheless, the mission schools appeared to be growing very slowly for several reasons.

34. At that time, British India was ruled under four Presidencies: The Madras Presidency, Bombay Presidency, Delhi Presidency, and Calcutta Presidency. Each Presidency was run by a Governor General. The East Bengal and Assam regions, including Naga Hills District, were under the Calcutta Presidency with a Lieutenant Governor in Shillong, the capital of Assam.

The Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang (ABAM)[35] Minutes show no record of mission schools reports from 1898-1919. The last mission schools report was recorded at the association's annual meeting at Impur in 1898, as noted above. The absence of the progress report explains the hardships and obstacles that the mission school was experiencing during those difficult years. One very devastating factor was the threat of World War II. The threat of war in early 1900 must be considered as a reason for the absence of regular mission school reports. The overwhelming uncertainty of future survival overshadowed the minds of the entire population throughout the region. The chaotic situation must have impacted the smooth running of the village schools. This tumultuous political situation continued all the way to the early 1960s in the entire Naga Hills.

These were trying times for the mission schools to survive. Army service was mandatory for the young Ao Nagas to defend their country. Two things might have happened in those years. Mandatory army service might have jeopardized youngsters' academic progress. Also, the conflict and hurdles between the administration and the mission that impeded the education training program must have been hard to overcome. Meanwhile, the mission had to deal with its own issues of poor academic performance in the mission schools. The missions had to figure out how to do well both academically and spiritually as well.

Here, it is necessary to point out that the mission school's classroom was the place of mass evangelism. The students in the mission schools were to make ambassadors for Christ. McFayden observed that the mission strongly believed that primary education was essential to the "solid establishment of Christianity." McFayden further observed that from the "very beginning the schools in the Naga Hills aimed to teach the Ao Nagas the new religion to foster

35. The translation of ABAM is Ao Baptist Church Association.

deeper understanding and practice."[36] Thus beyond Molungyimsen village, mission schools came first to the Ao Naga villages, and gradually people began to embrace the Christian faith. Men and women from the mission schools were baptized. A policy of compulsory religious instruction in the mission school was adopted. As such, religious education was imparted first and foremost in the mission school system. Kijung acknowledged that the mission schools' focus was to raise pastors, teachers, and evangelists who would then carry the message of the Kingdom to other villages.[37] Thus, it was clear that the main purpose of the mission schools was to train future church leaders. The students were in the making of future church leaders for evangelism and church planting. Kijung barely mentions the instruction on academic excellence in the mission schools at this stage. No wonder there was so much consternation about the mission schools in the British Colonial Administration. Thus, the mission schools became a legitimate instrument for mass evangelism and church planting. The mission could not have found a better way to do evangelism and church planting in Ao country without the mission schools.

Impur Mission School and Mission Outreach

Impur Mission School was located at Impur Mission Compound, between Sungratus village and Mopungchuket village. Clark was a strategic leader, and soon he was looking for a more conveniently located mission station site since Molungyimsen Mission Station was at the far north end of the Ao country. After the agreement with the villagers on both sites, Sungrtus and Mopungcheket, the mission promised to pay 200 rupees to the landowner, and the land was deeded to the ABMU. After the land deal was settled, Clark asked the Mopungchuket village

36. McFayden, *Traveling in times,* p. 88.

37. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 106.

elders what they would name the new mission compound. One of the elders spoke up and said that since Clark was the pioneer of this new mission field, the place will be called "Impur" which is translated as "pioneer." The village elders called Clark "Impur chanu." "Chanu" is translated as "little one." The nuance would also suggest that Clark was adopted as the son of the soil, a pioneer. On October 1, 1894, Molungyimsen Mission Station was moved to the new location at Impur Mission Compound.[38] In Clark's mind, this conveniently located new mission station would serve not only the Ao Nagas but other tribes beyond the Ao country.

Kijung observed that Impur Mission Station was to serve as a center of education for the Ao Nagas. So, the purpose of Impur Mission School was not only for the Ao Nagas. It was intended to take the mission to other tribes. Those who graduated from the village mission schools became the teachers and pastors in the villages. Further, Kijung proudly observed that Impur Mission School produced numerous teachers, pastors, and evangelists over the years and sent them as missionaries and teachers to neighboring tribes. By 1945, students from the tribes of Sema, Lotha, Angami, Sangtam, Phom, Yimchunger, Konyak, Chang, and Khimongan were enrolled at the Impur Mission School. To Kijung, the Impur Mission School was a "Theological College" at that time.[39]

Earlier in the first section of this chapter, we noted that initially, the mission school was not in the American Baptist mission mindset. However, the missionaries realized the need for the local situation in the mission field and asked the Home Board to consider incorporating the native education training program in their policy. Once the policy was adopted, the mission schools became a powerful tool for massive evangelism and church planting. Now every village

38. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 64-65.

39. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p.106.

had a mission school in Ao land.[40] Those who graduated from the village mission school became pastors, evangelists, and schoolteachers. They went out to other villages and later to other tribes as pastors and schoolteachers and preached the gospel. Those who had wanted to pursue higher studies went to Impur Mission School. Thus, mission schools became synonymous with evangelism and discipleship ministry. It became a catalyst for greater evangelism and church planting throughout the period under investigation.

Medical Mission

The medical mission is another missional breakthrough that was about to unfold among the Ao Nagas.The medical mission requires a fuller exploration. The subject matter would qualify as a separate research topic on its own. However, this study will examine medical missions as an arm of evangelism. It appears that the medical mission was incessantly becoming a necessary part of evangelism. The mission might not have been fully aware of it, or perhaps, it was not prepared for a medical mission.

The Challenge of Medical Mission

But first, the challenge for a medical mission. In terms of the mission schools, Clark knew that it was necessary for the Ao Nagas to learn how to read and write and become proficient in math. But the medical mission was altogether a different ball game. It required medical training, and none of the missionaries for the first 30 years had medical school training. Therefore, the mission strategy was to find full-time medical missionary candidates to work at

40. The terms “Ao land” or “Ao Nagas” were interchangeably used by the mission. The British Administration consistently used the term “Naga Hills District of Assam” for their administrative purposes.

Impur Dispensary. This must have been an insurmountable challenge at first. For this reason, the Ao Naga medical mission had to wait another ten years for a designated full-time medical missionary. But it was a matter of time, and the situation would soon be changed.

Puthenpurackal reported that the first full-time medical missionary, W. A. Loops arrived at the Impur Dispensary in November 1905. This must have been a sigh of relief at Impur Dispensary. However, Dr. Loops' tenure was short-lived. We do not have enough evidence to discuss Loops' short tenure at Impur Dispensary. Puthenpurackal has not cited any particular reason why Dr. Loops had to return home in 1909, just after four years at Impur Mission Station. This was, however, not an unfamiliar incident for ABMU in the mission field. As noticed earlier, in the early 1890s, both Rev. Perrine and Rev. Haggard had to return home just after one term in the mission field. No particular reason was found for such a quick transition. Consequently, it appears that Loops' short stay had shown no substantial outcome in terms of native healthcare.

But the medical mission received a total makeover in the early 1910s. On December 12, 1910, Dr. and Mrs. James Riley Bailey arrived at Impur Mission Station. Dr. Bailey served as a medical missionary for 18 long years at the Impur Dispensary from 1910 until 1929. Puthenpurackal observed that in the first year alone, Dr. Bailey handled over 1000 cases at Impur Dispensary. Throughout his tenure at Impur, an average of 2500 outpatients were cared for every year. The statistics we found in Puthenpurackal's report were done in general terms. It was based on yearly output, not based on monthly or daily medical reports. The mission report would take 6-12 months to arrive at the Home Board office in Boston, depending on the maritime travel situation. It would make hardly any difference to have either weekly or monthly reports then. But it would have been reasonable at the mission station to make an annual report for their record. However, it poses a challenge for researchers to read the report and ascertain what a daily

medical report would look like at the Impur Dispensary. It requires a careful analysis to understand the numbers in the report. Puthenpurackal shared a stunning report about Dr. Bailey's medical mission in 1914. This number should be reliable.

> About 100 inpatients cared for: about 5000 outpatients, 1000 free treatments given (to) Impur schoolboys. Something over 200 sick calls were made throughout the district, 50 minor operations were performed, and a total of over 7000 treatments were given. To do this work many hundreds of miles had to be traveled on the pony and when paths were too steep, on the foot. Many times, I have sat down to rest, thinking that my last ounce of strength had been used up, only to renew the climb in a few minutes, upon till the village was reached, and there to meetings, sell medicine, visit the sick and then to bed about midnight, tired and weary, yet conscious of being spent in the Master's service. [41]

This report is a classic example of a holistic care service addressing both the physical and spiritual needs of the people, whom Dr. Bailey associated with as a medical missionary. The mission schools served the spiritual needs of the people. Now the medical mission was extending to address the physical needs of the people. For fuller appreciation, this report can be further analyzed in three steps: Firstly, Impur Dispensary must have been rather a small place. Generally, a dispensary was where a few patients were given treatment for minor injuries, or headaches and stomach pain. One can see the enormous challenge Dr. Bailey and his staff were facing at Impur Dispensary daily. How to cope up with an acute medical emergency would be a modern day medical dilemma.

According to this report, 1000 boy students at Impur Mission School were given free medical treatments a year. It could mean that all the boys who attended Impur Mission School were given free medical care. This medical service was a new concept among the Ao Nagas. Consequently, Impur Mission School must have attracted lots of students from all over the Naga Hills district. What would the parents of 1000 boys have thought about the free medical treatments their boys were receiving from the mission at Impur Dispensary? Would it be an

41. Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Mission in Nagaland,* p. 114.

incentive or an objection? Certainly, this free medical care must have made a positive impression on the minds of both parents and students. The physical challenges for the practitioner and caregivers must have been formidable. The geographical challenge must have taken a toll on Dr. Bailey's own health during those years in the field. He had to travel hundreds of miles on a pony and wherever it was not accessible to the pony, on foot. The report also indicates Dr. Bailey was sent as a preacher in the first place and worked as a physician and a pharmacist who sold medication to the villagers.

In terms of the total number of the Ao Naga population, we can compare with J. P. Mills statistics, from *Ao Naga* published in 1926. Mills' report coincides with Puthenpurackal's report of Dr. Bailey's year at Impur Dispensary. Mills reported that the Ao Naga population totaled 30,599 at the census of 1921.[42] Based on the most recent census, if Mills' report was correct, then there was a 14,401-population disparity between Mills' report and Dr. Bailey's report in terms of the total population of the Ao Nagas. As noted above in the previous section of our discussion, by this time, people from seven other tribes were enrolled at Impur Mission School. People from seven tribes would easily explain this difference in number in the statistic. The point here is that the claim that Dr. Bailey's medical mission services affected 45,000 people is not totally unfounded. This was a worthy contribution made by a medical mission in just 18 years. The mission might have been proud of this new venture.

However, as the saying goes, there is a time for everything, a time of prosperity, and a time of trial. This was true for the mission as well. According to Puthenpurackal, the successful Impur Dispensary received a sad setback at the sudden demise of Dr. Bailey on December 8, 1928. After that, Impur Dispensary could no longer afford a medical missionary. The Dispensary

42. J. P. Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, Macmillan, London, 1926, p. 4.

was served by compounders or nurses and from time to time by a government doctor from the civil hospital at Mokokchung. In 1953, at Impur, missionary Rev. A. S. Truxton recognized the need for medical care and appealed to the ABMU. However, before the mission could find another medical missionary, the political situation in the Naga Hills became unsafe, and the missionaries had to leave the Impur station rather abruptly. By the summer of 1955, there were no missionaries left at Impur Mission Station. Ordinary cases of common sickness were treated at the Impur Dispensary, to keep alive a service that was so appreciated by the population.[43]

By any standard of mission praxis, the medical mission at Impur Dispensary was a success. Thousands of lives were touched and must have been deeply affected among the Ao Nagas and among the other Naga tribes. Dr. Bailey's service would be remembered by the Ao Nagas for many more years by future generations. The ABMU could not afford to lack a medical mission at Impur Mission Station. However, a new impetus was emerging in the 1930s, which created a breakthrough in the field of medical education among the native Ao Nagas. The first Ao Naga who graduated from medical school was Dr. Kazukaba Ao from Longkhum village (1930). The second to graduate was Dr. Longrikaba Ao from Changki village (1936). Another medical graduate was Dr. Imkongliba Ao from Aonokpu (Nokpo Imjen) village (1936). The fourth medical graduate, a woman, was Dr. Imtisangla Longkumer from Changki village (1941). Again, this new era of medical education among the native Nagas was interrupted. For nearly 20 years, we do not have any records to show medical school graduates among the Ao Nagas. This setback is perhaps due to WWII and the political turmoil in the Naga Hills.

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43. Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Mission in Nagaland,* p. 115.

Medical Mission and Evangelism

The healthcare service was not directly engaged in evangelism, in contrast with the mission schools. The mission school was an effective tool for mass evangelism with a clear message of the Gospel. The mission purpose was to bring the knowledge of salvation to their students in the classroom. This purpose required all students to be baptized. In contrast, the healthcare ministry was to prepare the environment to receive the gospel. In the beginning, Clark was determined to preach the gospel only. However, early on, missionary Clark recognized the necessity for medical care for him to preach the gospel.

As referred to above, the book by Dr. McFayden *Traveling in Time with Pioneers of Our Faith* aptly suggested that Clark was truly a pioneer of the Ao Naga Christian mission. In addition to the literary work and the native educational training program, Clark was also a pioneer of the medical mission. Though the medical mission was not the mission priority, Clark repeatedly insisted upon medical aid. About thirty-five years later, the medical mission became a reality in Ao country. With the coming of Dr. James Riley Bailey in 1912, Impur Dispensary was up and running, providing free medical care to thousands of patients every year in a meager medical facility at Impur Dispensary.

As early as 1873, Clark realized the need for medicine, and he asked the Missionary Executive Committee to grant him some allowance for it. Puthenpurackal reports that in 1874 Clark asked the Committee to grant him an allowance for a small stock of medicine and requested them to send him a box of Perry Davis painkiller and Jayne's Medicines. For the first time, he included 75 rupees specifically for medicines for the Ao Nagas in the appropriation for 1878, and added his reason by saying, "...success under God in treating the sick has been of great

service in mission work."[44] Again in 1881, Clark wrote to the Secretary of ABMU calling to his attention the need for a medical mission. He recommended that a potential missionary might take some medical course along with his theological studies, while insisting that his priority was preaching the Gospel. "Let the main thing, he insisted on preaching the gospel, not doctoring the body." [45] This seemed to be the mission's attitude then toward the native healthcare services.

Clearly, the priority in Clark's mind, which represented the mission mindset at that time, was "preaching the gospel, not doctoring the body." There was no evidence suggesting a medical mission of any sort for twenty years from 1874-1894. However, it appears that Clark's persistent request for a medical mission was finally accepted by the Home Board. During his furlough at home. Rivernburg from Kohima Mission Station enrolled at Johns Hopkins University Medical Center in February 1892. Rev. Rivernburg completed his medical training in September 1894 and returned the same year to Kohima Mission Station.[46] This was the first step toward a medical mission in the Naga Hills. This step was significant. Now the medical mission became a part of the missional enterprise for evangelism. This was another mission breakthrough for the mission among the Ao Naga Nagas and towards the Naga tribes in general.

Clark insisted on medical care for the Ao Nagas because he believed that when the bleeding from their wounds stopped, they would begin to trust the missionary. We do not have evidence to show that Dr. Loops or Dr. Bailey at the Impur Dispensary directly engaged in evangelism. But the role of health care in the process of evangelism can hardly be minimized. Thus, one can safely conclude that the health care service was part and parcel of evangelism.

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44. Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Mission in Nagaland,* p. 30.

45. Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Mission in Nagaland,* p. 84.

46. It should be noted that in 1887, Rev. Rivenburg moved from Molungyimsen Mission Station. He was stationed at Kohima Mission Station. But the fact that Rev. Rivenburg obtained medical training was evidence that the efforts initiated by Clark earlier were now beginning to bear fruit.

Mission and the Colonial Administration

The relationship between the mission and the British Colonial Administration is worth mentioning here. It should be noted that the relationship between mission and the colonial administration in the Ao country was not a conflict free enterprise. However, this conflict was somewhat anticipated. Earlier, the collaboration between the administration and the mission was out of necessity. In the 1870s, the mission needed protection from the administration. Even so, the administration wanted to bring an end to the Ao Naga headhunting menace that was being inflicted on the British settlement in the Assam valley by constant Naga raids.

The situation had evolved during the last 40 years, and the British political landscape had changed in the Ao Naga Hills. As pointed out earlier, the colonial administration had its own political interest in occupying the Ao country in 1889. Their goal was to bring tranquility and maintain peace in Anglo-Ao Naga relations. The British agenda for the native education program among the Ao Nagas was that it would provide entry-level clerks in various colonial government agencies. In other words, primarily the colonial administration was looking for resources for their administration. They were not necessarily interested in the welfare of the Ao Nagas.

In fact, the same policy pattern was reflected in the rest of India during the period under investigation. The Indian workers would fill in the lower-level positions like in the post office and railways. The top-level positions were reserved for British officials only. Thus there was a clear difference between the Christian mission school and the colonial education policy toward the native. The motive of the colonial administration education policy surfaced again and again throughout 280 years of colonial rule in India. The colonial administration policy in the Ao Naga Hills district of Assam was not different; it was to serve their vested political interests. On the other hand, the compelling motive of the mission schools was to teach changed lives. The

mission school system was for evangelism and to introduce the knowledge of the truth. However, the colonial administration had sharply conflicted with the mission on social issues on different occasions. The mission recognized the importance of local culture and tradition and would not allow the Ao Nagas to lose them. Following Sanneh, the mission wanted to translate the message to Ao culture in their language and so wanted to help keep most of their traditional way of life along with being a Christian. Whereas, from the practice of the colonial administration in the rest of India, they did not want the natives to become Christians but wanted them to keep their old faiths as long as they could serve as clerks and peons, etc. for the colonial administration. Therefore, William Carey was kicked out of Calcutta first and settled in Serampore under Danish control.

On the other hand, the colonial administration claimed that the missions were unnecessarily "interfering" with native culture and society. The administration was afraid that the mission was influencing the natives to abandon traditional attire by asking the students in their classrooms to wear "foreign" clothing like *dhotis* for men and *blouses* for women.[47] Prof. Haimendorf, a prodigy of Mills, went as far as to say that the mission was going to "ruin the natives' way of life." He feared that this would have dire economic repercussions in the future. [48] To address the issue, the mission was given instructions to allow the Ao Nagas to only wear traditional clothing in the classroom. To enforce this agenda the administration would award scholarships to only those students who wore traditional attire in the classroom.

47. *Dhoti* and *blouse* were foreign clothing imported from Assam. The students at mission schools were required to wear these imported clothing.

48. Haimendorf, *The Naked Nagas,* London, 1939, p. 52-53.

Mission and the Church

This section will highlight the influence of the church on the Ao Naga's social life. We will call upon certain ecclesiastical leaders who had firsthand experience with the mission and the church. Dr. Ben Wati was one of the prominent church leaders among the Ao Nagas. It would be worthwhile to examine Ben Wati's work, particularly the *Aoo Kaketkeno Lipok, Juri Otsu Kaket,* to understand the impact of the mission and the church more clearly. In his work, Ben Wati tied Aoo literature development to the spread of modern education. As we have discussed above, the spread of Western education ultimately led to the transformation of the entire Ao Naga traditional society into a Christian society. Clark sowed the seeds, and the native leaders built upon Clark's foundation.

Supongmeren was the first Ao Naga introduced to missionary Clark in Sibsagar Mission Station. However, Aokilep,[49] from Molungyimsen village, became the first Ao Naga literateur. Kilep was the first student in 1877, and he became the first Ao Naga educator from the Clark era. Ben Wati made an impressive report on Kilep, about his ability and his achievements. Kilep became the president of the Christian Endeavour (CE) in 1897. As pointed out in chapter two, Dr. and Mrs. Clark were accompanied by three native leaders who assisted them in completing the *Ao Dictionary* in 1911. Kilepalvm was one of the three. It appears that Aokilep, or Kilep as he was referred to, was the son of Kilepalvm. Kilep became the first ordained pastor among the Ao Nagas. He was also a linguist. Kilep spoke Bengali so fluently that the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO, Civil) at Mokokchung, J. H. Hutton, was duped into thinking that Kilep was a Bengali himself. We do not know Kilep's exact educational level, but his skill in mathematics was ahead of his time. Kilep knew the concept of numbers from zero to a billion. *Kongdong*

49. As refers to as Kilep from this point on.

means a billion in Ao as it appears in the Ao Dictionary.[50]

According to Ben Wati, Kilep will be remembered for his many accomplishments, but he will be remembered most for his leadership in literacy development for generations to come. The Aoo literature was still in the making in Kilep's days. Kilep coined a very significant new word in Aoo literature called "asenok." It is hard to find an equivalent word for "asenok" in English, but the nuance of the word is a common good, an idea of togetherness.[51] Why was this new word so significant? Scholars will have a better understanding of the social structure by paying closer attention to the etymology and nuance of Kilep's new word, "asenok."

In the Ao Naga traditional society, there was not much to say about the concept of commonality or the common good. Indeed, the Ao Nagas had common interests for the common good in their village society. But one must understand that this commonality or common good in community living was limited to their own nucleus village. This sense of common good was hardly applied outside of one's own village. It would not be fair to say that there was no commonality among the Ao Nagas, but it would be fair to say that the idea of a common good that existed in the Ao Naga traditional society was limited in scope and vision. In the absence of such a concept of commonality or common good, outside of their village, it is no surprise that the Ao Naga society was systematically divided. Their sovereignty ran to their own village level. This was different from individual ownership, wealth, and fame, as we discussed earlier. This was more of a philosophical concept of social structure. This social milieu that was systematically dividing them might have concerned Kilep. What really went through Kilep's mind was to unite the people under the banner of the Godhead. He was deeply involved with the

50. Wati, *Aoo Kaket Lipok*, 2011, p. 17.

51. The italic is the author's own interpretation of the word "asenok."

idea and must have thought about how to remedy this social stalemate. Like gold is minted from a furnace, Kilep must have minted this word "asenok" from the furnace of his own social experience.

Second, the concept of togetherness had a profound impact on the Ao Naga social milieu. The concept of togetherness created a platform for unity among the Ao Naga for a common cause, and for a "shared vision."[52] The formation of the Ao Baptist Church Association, uniting all the Ao Naga villages, was unthinkable at that time among the Ao Nagas. But the first association annual meeting was held at Kilep's own village, Molungyimsen, in 1897, and Kilep was the recorder (Secretary) of the meeting, with Rev. Perrine as chair. Kilep's detailed recording of the association meeting was found in the *Minutes of the Ao Baptist Church Association* page 8. Later, this idea of unity was extended to all the Naga tribes. Sequentially, the Lotha Baptist Church Association was formed in 1923, followed by the Sema Baptist Church Association which was formed in 1929.[53] It is no exaggeration to say there was no unity among the Nagas before they embraced the Christian faith. Take note of this, until recently, every Naga individual identified herself or himself, with their individual tribe's name affixed to their own. For example, Kevischa Angami, Nyamo Lotha, or Hokishe Sema, Rev. Longri Ao, or Rev. Kijung Ao, and so on. By 1946, when it was becoming obvious that the British were leaving India, the Nagas must have felt that they needed to affirm their own Naga identity, for a sovereign rule. We will leave this topic for a future research study.

The nuance of common ground or common goals by Kilep must have provided a platform

52. Senge at MIT discussed in detail about the "shared vision" in his book. *The Fifth Discipline,* Random House, New York, 1994. Senge emphasized that in a successful business, entrepreneurial leadership comes from nurturing the shared vision with others.

53. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 115-116.

for the Naga political identity in the long run. A seemingly simple word like “asenok” had a domino effect on Ao Naga social transformation and political association in later days. A new horizon was looming in the field of education. In the next few pages, we will introduce several Ao Naga educators and their contributions to the field of education. These Ao Nagas educators were themselves products of Impur Mission School. As we shall see, in their own words, mission school instilled the idea of a new way of living in a developed world to each of the learned Ao Nagas.

In conclusion, the mission was indigenized among the Ao Nagas through modern education. The mission entered the Ao Naga social milieu and in turn, the Ao Nagas entered the mission. Thus, the mission school became the most effective tool for evangelism and church planting. Eventually, Ao Naga society was transformed. The natives were trained to become pastors, teachers, and evangelists in the mission school. Those who graduated from the village school were sent out as pastors and schoolteachers to other villages. The criticism by the colonial administration that the mission school was not competent enough academically may have been true and reason enough to believe. The mission would have admitted the fact that their school system was found to be lacking academic excellence. However, in terms of their main objective to evangelize the Ao Naga village population, the mission was more than happy with their number of converts. According to the Ao Baptist Church Association annual meeting at Yimjenkimong Baptist Church on November 13-16, 1930, the number who attended the annual meeting was 3030. These numbers represent only the delegates from churches. Again, this number was only baptized members. It was possible there could have been another thousand members who were in the process of conversion in the Ao churches. Such a total number of churches and members were not found in the report.

A significant development was taking place in the report. By the 1930s, the Ao Nagas were sending missionaries in great numbers as pastors and schoolteachers and evangelists to other Naga tribes among the Lotha, Sema, Sangtam, Chang, Yimchunger, Konyak, Phom, and Angamis.[54] In the meantime, the Ao churches grew gradually and steadily. According to Kijung, from the inception of the first church in Molung (Dekaihamong) on Dec 23, 1872 to the cutoff year of this study in 1955, there were 58 churches and 20, 404 baptized members within the umbrella of the Ao Baptist Church Association.[55]

As noted above, the mission school faced two critical challenges to go through: WWII in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and the Naga political conflict in the late 1940s and early 1950s. These were difficult times for the Ao Nagas and Nagas in general. Yet, the mission endured hardship and showed the strength to grow in "wisdom and stature" (Luke 2:40). Thus, by 1955, when the last missionary left Impur Mission Station, the native leaders like Rev. Kijung Ao were mature enough to take the reins of leadership of the Ao churches.

The relationship between the mission and the Cclonial administration was not a conflict free zone. It was like an unholy matrimonial. Yet, the conflict was anticipated because of their different motives. The colonial administration must have followed their political dictum to extend their political influence among the "Naked Nagas" including the Ao tribe. On the other hand, the objective of the mission was to evangelize the "heathens" with the gospel of the Kingdom. At the end of the day, once the savage Ao Nagas were given the opportunity to join

54. *ABAM Minutes Report,* Impur, 2014, p.43.

55. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 129.

the developed world, it would have been rewarding to both the mission and the colonial administration alike.

CHAPTER FOUR

TRANSFORMATION OF THE SOCIETY BY MISSION

Christian mission entered the Ao Naga social milieu and transformed its culture and society. As the title suggests, social transformation is the focus of our discussion in this final chapter. We were told, a long time ago Christ was born in Bethlehem in Judea. Now Christ was "reborn" in the Ao villages and drank from the Ao Naga cup. What transpired in the culture by way of transformation will form the main thesis of this study.[1]

The Vernacularization and Indigenizing Principle

Chapter one briefly introduced the methodology of this study based on Sanneh's vernacular translation and Walls's Indigenizing Principle. In this chapter we want to focus our discussion on social transformation by mission in greater detail with its theological implication. What happened when the mission landed in their neighborhood? What did the mission do to the local custom and tradition? How did the mission interact with the culture? What was the response from the local culture? Were the local people hostile to the mission? These are the inquiries we will attempt to answer during discussion in the following pages. As pointed out earlier, to Professor Sanneh, the local culture was the axis of mission in the early modern mission period. This statement is relevant for the current mission studies among the Ao Nagas. We will dissect a relevant portion of Sanneh's previous quotation to support the current discussion here.

> ...early modern missionaries had followed the logic of the translatability of Christianity

1. Walls refers to the term mission transmission in a specific people group. As it was expected, the mission was translated into the Ao Naga cultural setting transforming their local custom and tradition. The Ao Naga traditional way of life was readjusted, reformatted and their new Christian faith was put in a new wineskin of social order.

> and submitted the religion in the most exacting way to the terms of local cultures. By so doing, missionaries became indigenized in the best sense of the term, rather than cultural imperialists. Translation thus brought the Christian mission into original congruence with vernacular demands, with tacit repudiation of Western culture as necessary and universal norm of the gospel.[2]

First, Professor Sanneh's comment on the Roman Catholic mission in south India, particularly the work of Italian missionary Robert De Nobili in the 17th century was like the Ao Naga Christian mission in the late 19th and early 20th century. Sanneh made the following observation about Robert De Nobili:

> For De Nobili, as for the early Christians, the gospel had not come to uproot but to build upon, not to reject but to renew. He saw Christianity as the flowering of all that was best in India, not the pretext for imposing Western culture on Indians...The refinement he subsequently made to his theology reflected the depth of Indian impact on his thinking. In one matter he continued to defy the India he had learned so wholeheartedly to embrace, and that was the observance of the Mass where he made the Latin formula of consecration over unleavened bread and wine imported from Europe instead of using locally produced rice-cakes and wine made from raisins soaked in water as had been the wont until the practice was discontinued in 1599 (Cronin 1959-146-47).[3]

Augmenting the vernacular mission for contextual theology, Sanneh further observed that the Vatican Council II (1963-1965) brought about numerous experiments and reforms in the life of liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church. Among such reforms, the use of mother tongue in the church liturgy was the most prominent one. He stated by saying it had "virtually sealed the undeniable importance of the vernacular in the Roman Catholic Church."[4] Why the vernacular translation played such a prominent role in the church was clearly stated in the Vatican II constitution.

> Liturgical services are not private functions but are celebrations of the Church ...The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear and unencumbered by any useless repetitions, they should be within the people's powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation. (SC 26, 34)[5]

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2. Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, p.124.

3. Sanneh, *Translating the Message,* p.136.

4. Sanneh, Translating the Message, p. 277, Appendix I.

From the above quotation one can see that the contextualized mission was on the top of Sanneh's mind. To reinforce his argument for contextualized mission, Sanneh cited the example of the Protestant mission in India by missionary William Carey. Sanneh stated that the coming of William Carey (1761-1834) to India in 1793 was a landmark in the history of Christian mission. As he was known, William Carey was a shoemaker missionary, with a humble English Nonconformist background. William Carey occupies an important place in the missionary vernacular initiative toward Asia and Africa. He was the founder of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792, and the London Missionary Society in 1795. Carey understood that the expansion of Christianity abroad should be "something different from the perpetuation of denominationalism or the imposition of Western ecclesiastical forms."[6]

It will take volumes to discuss all about Carey's work in detail. However, we just glimpse through Carey's vernacular translation to see how years later, Clark followed the same pattern aomg the Ao Nagas. Prof Sanneh reported that at Serampore, Carey and his colleagues set up a printing press and taught Bengali. In fact, Carey's linguistic research of Bengali contributed to the revival of Bengali literature. Carey and his missionary companions at Serampore took a leading part in establishing Serampore as a major translation center. By 1832, Carey's printing press at Serampore produced religious material in forty-four languages and dialects. Carey's proficiency in Sanskrit was more than enough that he translated the Indian *epic* poem *Ramayana* to introduce readers to the Indian classics. Prof Sanneh saw that Carey's venture into the Indian classical Sanskrit literature *Ramayan*a was a gateway for the mission to be connected to India's cultural mainstream, and India connected to Christian mission. Sanneh observed: "Christian

5. Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, p. 277.

6. Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, p.137-138.

mission not only penetrated India, but India also penetrated Christian mission and changed its priorities."[7]

Here, it is worthwhile to point out that the missionary Edward Clark's vernacular mission had a striking similarity with Carey's Baptist Mission in Calcutta. Nearly 40 years after William Carey passed in 1834, missionary Rev. E. W. Clark arrived at Sibsagar Mission Station in 1869. As McFayden reported in chapter one, Clark's job description at Sibsagar Mission Station was the manager of the mission printing press. Within two years of Clark's arrival in Sibsagar, the printing press improved greatly. The circulation of the only Assamese newspaper, *Orunodoi* was doubled under Clark stewardship. Before he relocated to Molung village in the Ao Naga Hills, while he was still in Sibsagar, Clark was said to have composed the first Ao Naga hymn in 1871. Since then, the Clarks' vernacular translation went unabated. Thus, it is safe to say that William Carey was the progenitor of the mission in Assam, and Clark was William Carey's prodigy. We shall now turn our attention to Walls' Indigenizing Principle.

Second, Professor Andrew F. Walls observed two opposing tendencies in mission studies.

> On the one hand it is the essence of the Gospel that God accepts us as we are, on the ground of Christ's work alone, not on the ground of what we have become or are trying to become. But, if He accepts us "as we are" that implies He does not take us isolated, self-governing units, because we are not. We are conditioned by a particular time, place, by our family and group and society, by "culture."[8]

The main point of Wall's Indigenizing Principle is that in the first place "God accepts us as we are, on the ground of Christ's work alone." At the same time, ``He accepts us as we are" implies that we are not an "isolated, self-governing unit, because we are not." The most relevant part of Wall's theory for this section of discussion is we belong to our human group; at home we

7. Sanneh, *Translating the Message,* p.139.

8. Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian Mission History. New York: Orbis Book*, 2004, p. 7.

live together and work together in our workplace. In other words, we are obliged to our human condition, our social environment. In other words, we are not robots which are not flexible or cannot be influenced by outside force. Therefore, we are conditioned by our social and cultural environment, historical time, location, and culture. In the following discussion we shall incorporate these two mission theories into the Ao Naga mission theology.

The narrative of Clark's vernacular mission among the Ao Nagas was a unique one. It was somewhat different from Carey's in Calcutta. Carey translated the classical Indian literature including *Ramayana* whereas Clark had to start from scratch. As reported earlier, the Ao Naga belonged to a non-literate community. They did not have the written script, so the Ao Naga relied on oral tradition for vital day to day communication in the community. As the saying goes, "Necessity is the mother of invention" was paramount in mission among the Ao Nagas.

As discussed in chapter three, a new day for native education programs had arrived among the Ao Nagas. A prompt action by the Home Board to incorporate the mission school in 1894 allowed the Home Board to send a designated education missionary to Impur Mission Station. Consequently, as early as 1901, a designated education missionary couple, Rev. & Mrs. Dowd arrived at Impur Mission Station. Rev. & Mrs. Dowd served the mission school at Impur Mission Station for 20 years from 1901-1921. With the coming of the Dowds, the mission school received a new impetus. Under the Dowds' stewardship, school enrollment increased, and daily attendance was improved as truancy declined. As noted above, the turmoil caused by WWI interrupted the mission school and witnessed sluggish growth during the period of 1910-1920. However, as the war threat was winding down, the mission school geared up to the task. We shall now turn our attention to the main topic of our discussion: the transformation of society by mission with its theological implication.

Theological Implication

As Prof Sanneh pointed out earlier in the context of Protestant mission in India, here the Christian mission penetrated the Ao Naga social milieu by vernacular mission. What happened next? The mission began to rock the boat. The mission was breaking into the local belief system changing the Ao Naga worldview. It challenged the age old local custom and tradition. In the process the entire social structure was reformatted. The mission found a new residence in the Ao Naga social milieu.

Origin or the Creation Theory of the Ao Nagas

The Ao Naga creation theory was a simple one. Folklore has the Ao Naga belief that they originated from "Ongtrok," or "Longtrok,"[9] it literally means "Six stones." The word "poktet" can be translated as "come out" in English. They were told that their forefathers came out of six stones in Koritang. In modern times the six stones still exist south of Longsa village. As discussed in chapter two, Clark in his first Ao Naga hymn composition had the Ao Naga believe that Jesus Christ or Longkeezungba Tsungrem (God) is the true living God. Clark did not dispute the Ao Naga theology of origin from "Longtrok." Rather, he took on the name of their own God to translate his idea of the Almighty God in the minds of the Ao Nagas. The process did not change their faith in God, rather transformed their worldview, their belief system. The Christian mission presented the Ao Nagas the object of their faith.

9. Engtrok" or "Longtrok" literally means "six stones." The Ao Nagas were told by their forefathers that they came out of six stones. The Ao Nagas were "poktet from the six stones. Here the word "poktet" in Jungli and "okjet" in Mongsen could be translate as originated of simply put it, origin. (Gn 1:1) This Longtrok was the Ao Naga theology of creation. The exact location of these six stones is found south of Longsa village today. The difference between pantheism and polytheism is that pantheism denies God personally and identifies God with nature. The Ao Nagas were not pantheistic, their religion was based on polytheism. They might not know one true God, but they sure believe in an "unknown God."

Therefore, their origin of belief in Ongtrok stayed in place, but it was strengthened on a far bigger scale. It created a curiosity in the minds of the Ao Nagas and instilled in them something to believe beyond what they could comprehend in the now. Thus, the Christian mission created an aspiration in their hearts and minds to believe in something beyond their grasp, something supernatural beyond human logic and which intellect could explain or understand.

Polytheism to Monotheism

Let us briefly review the Ao Naga idea of worship here. The idea of worship was a complex issue in the world of the Ao Nagas. The Ao Nagas belonged to the polytheistic community, and as such, they worshipped many objects in the realm of nature; anything that was in their favor. But the old polytheistic idea was replaced by Longeezungba, Jesus Christ the one true living God. Kijung observed that a great transformation took place. By 1909, the Christian population increased to 1,359 under ABAM. The conflict arose between believers and non-believers, between the church and the world. About that time the Ao Nagas celebrated 26 variant festivals. Each festival attested to a certain deity in the realm of nature. For example, Moatsu festival was celebrated during the first week of the month of May after planting the seed every year. The celebration lasted for 7 days with a great happy time and boom.

The significance of Moastsu was to invoke blessing by sending rain on the soil. They would offer worship to Longeezungba, who was believed to be the god of rain and thunder who resided in the sky.[10] On March 10, 1910, the Sub-Divisional Officer at Mokokchung ordered the church community to observe all the festivals except a few of them. This put the church in an awkward

10. Among the Ao Nagas there was dispute between the two dieties. In some Ao villages Lijaba was believed to be the creator of the world. In other villages Longeezungba was the creator of the world. It depends on whom you ask the question. There was no unity about these two dieties matter.

position with non-believers in the village. The mission refused to comply with the colonial administration decree on the grounds that the church celebrates Christmas instead of traditional Moatsu festivals. Kijung was dismayed to report that this case went all the way to the Deputy Commissioner's (DC) Court in Kohima.[11] Thus, the polytheistic idea of worship was transformed into monotheistic in the minds of the Ao Nagas. The monotheistic doctrine might not have been fully absorbed, yet the formation of the seed of monotheism was instilled in the minds of the Ao Nagas by mission.

Was There Slavery in the Ao Naga Traditional Society?

The practice of slavery among the Ao Nagas in their traditional society is an intriguing issue. At the same time, this topic of slavery is a hard one to discuss among researchers. First, no source material was available about slavery among the Ao Nagas until recently. The topic of slavery in Ao traditional society might have bothered scholars from time to time, but no one was bold enough to make it a research priority. A meager amount of information on the subject matter started emerging at the beginning of the 21st century. With very limited source materials, this study is an attempt to explore the issue of slavery in the Ao Naga traditional society. We must point out that the primary focus of this study is to show that a major shift took place for social and cultural transformation. Thus, we will leave the anthropological aspect of the subject matter of slavery to the concern of the anthropologists.

Back to our discussion, Ben Wati's first book about slavery was published by Senti Kaket Yimyim,[12] The title of the book was *Alar Indang* or *About the Slavery.* From cover to cover the

11. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mungchen,* Gauhati, 1972, p. 89-91.

12. Ben Wati, *Alar Indang,* Oxford, 2007

book is hardly 43 pages in Ao vernacular, but this little book provides vital information on slavery. Ben Wati believed that slavery was somewhat related to the headhunting way of life. This becomes clear when we ask the question of where slavery originated among the Ao Nagas in their traditional society.

In their headhunting day, the loser would submit to the winner and the chances are the loser would become a slave. The reason this subject became touchy among scholars was perhaps because the Ao Naga loved freedom. Thus, slavery was taboo in the minds of the Ao Nagas. The worst insult for an Ao Naga is to say, "You are a descendant of a slave."[13] This was a social stigma. The Ao Nagas never liked to associate themselves with slavery at any given point of time. However, Ben Wati's main point in this book was to declare that we are redeemed once and for all. (Heb 10:10). We are free forever in the blood of Christ.

The book *Alar Indang* is a story about a former slave named Lidemkokba from Satsuk village with the author's own personal reflection. In the book, Lidemkokba confessed freely, "I was a true slave, I was a true slave, I was a true slave" three times. Apparently, there were ranks in the slave system. He confessed three times to make it clear that he was a slave beyond a reasonable doubt. The author observed that Lidemkokba's testimony was an amazing story. It was truly significant, and all Ao Naga Christians should know they are redeemed.

Ben Wati stated that writing this book gave him an opportunity for a moment of reckoning to tell his own story. When he was about six or seven years old, Ben Wati visited a very rich family in his village Changki with his mother. The rich man's name was Jongshilemba. The family was so rich that they could afford to have five or six slaves at the same time working in the kitchen. At that age, Ben Wati had no idea that those workers were slaves. After this event, the author forgot

13. Wati, *Alar indang,* p. 5.

about the nice meal he had and went on with his life. As he traveled around the world preaching and teaching, Ben Wati happened to read Booker T. Washington's two books with many tears: *Up from Slavery* published by Doubleday & Company, Garden City, NY (1901) and *Working with Hands* (1904). He also read, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* published by John, P. Jewett and Company, Cleveland Ohio, (1852) by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. One thing Ben Wati realized was that by depending on slave services, rich people became lazy. Stowe's description about slave life was heart wrenching. Her book brought about a revolution in American civil society. In the meantime, it was reported that Lidemkokba was freed from Jongshilemba, and moved away from Changki village to Satsuk village. He became Christian, got married and had four children.[14]

Then the author resolved the mystery, he found that Lidemkokba was the very one who served the delicious food to him about 70 years ago. The author acknowledged that this was an eye-opening moment for him. Ben Wati occupied a prominent place among the Ao Naga community. He was also well respected in the circle of the global Christian faith community. As cited elsewhere in this study, he has 14 books to his credit in Ao vernacular including, *"Alar Indang,"* and the complete Ao Naga Bible, published by him in 1964. Yet his personal story of reconciliation in the past speaks volumes to the Ao Naga social transformation. So much so, he reconciled his own guilt and became a powerful testimony to the gospel he preached around the world throughout his lifetime. This worthy son of an Ao Naga warrior passed at the good old age 92 on June 12, 2012, leaving a legacy of the "ministry of reconciliation" among us for the generations to come (2 Cor 5:18-19). We shall now turn our attention to the next level of social

14. Later, Wati reported that Lidemkokba became the mission treasurer in Satsuk Baptist Church. Lidemkokba's story had a profound impact on Ben Wati personally. At the same time, Wati observed that this was a great victory in the realm of Ao Naga traditional culture and society by mission transmission. According to Wati, during 1983- 1984, members of Jungshilemba's descendants from Changki village came to confess their father's misdeeds in the form of slavery in the past. Wati wanted to highlight what transpired in their mind.

transformation through mission school.

Mission School and Social Transformation

As mentioned in chapter one, the Indian census of 2011 reported the literacy rate among the Ao Nagas as 91.62 percent, and the state of Nagaland literacy stands at 87 percent. Currently, Nagaland state holds the second highest literacy rate in the country, next to the state of Kerala in South India. It was reported that the literacy rate of the state of Kerala stands at 93 percent. Overall, the national literacy rate stands at 46 percent. We see that the Ao Naga literacy rate stands higher than among other tribes in the state as well as in the national ranking. The same census, 2011 report also indicated that 2.34 percent are Christians in India with a total population of 1.3 billion. Nagaland and Mizoram are the only two Christian states in India.

One may ask why the Ao Naga literacy rate stands much higher than the rest of the country. Without a doubt in the minds of the Ao Nagas, this high literacy rate in our land owes it all to the Christian mission. A story was told about two Ao Nagas who came to the United States at different times to explain the outcome of one big story of the proclamation of the good news of the Kingdom. Today, these two individuals Ao Nagas represent two sides of their story. One came in the 1970s to pursue higher education claiming that "Our forefathers were headhunters." His friends must have been greatly impressed for he took such pride in the courage and valor of his forefathers who were headhunters. The other Ao Naga who came in the 1990s as a missionary was grateful. He proclaimed, "I am standing here today to testify to the mission for planting the seed of the good news of the Kingdom in our land to our forefathers; to say "Thank you" for showing us the generosity of your love to our forefathers who were headhunters. Today, the Ao Nagas are free people; we see the light of the world.

Historically, it is necessary to re-examine what transpired in the process of transformation in the traditional culture and society during the 80 years of mission influence. The mission school liberated the Ao Nagas into the modern world.[15] So the posterity of the Ao Naga headhunters are standing here today to proclaim "righteousness" to the ends of the world for the wonderful thing "he has done" (Psalm 22:30-31).

In chapter three we brought out the detailed information on the coming of Western or modern education. With the spread of Western modern education, the mission entered the Ao Naga local culture and transformed the society. In this section we will further examine the significance of indigenizing the local culture through the mission school. In other words, how did the mission school indigenize and bring about structural reform. After the native education program was incorporated, Rev. Rivenburg wrote an encouraging report to the Home Board in Boston in 1894. This report highlights two significant impacts of indigenizing the local culture. The report says there was a hope for "self-support" in the near future. In a situation where the mission was the entrepreneur on the educational front, then they must provide everything for the native education training program. The report clearly indicated that the mission knew that in the long run, the natives should support the village school themselves. The mission was aware that they do not want to create a situation where the natives would become dependent on a mission like a parasite. In this case, within four years of the native educational training program running, the mission could see the potential to make this education training program among the natives a self-supporting initiative. In other words, the Ao Naga Christians were willing to support themselves for their own education program. Rivenburg observed that there was a better house

15. The phrase "the Kingdom of God" is used here to differentiate from the counterfeit king of this world. Otherwise, we will continue to use the term the good news of the Kingdom whenever it is necessary throughout this study.

and apparatus provided by the community. The "apparatus" could mean a classroom with benches for students and chalkboards, and perhaps, textbooks for the students and the teachers.

The structural changes that were taking place in the community were remarkable. A new set of social structures was emerging in the Ao Naga social milieu. For example, the young Ao Nagas in the villages were expected to train for headhunting in their traditional society. Instead, the young people were enrolled in mission school. They were going to school with pencils and books, a new phenomenon for the Ao Naga girls and boys. The knives in their sheaves and their spears were made dull in the process. This transition was revolutionary in nature. In the end, the Ao Nagas were liberated from the darkness of social illiteracy into the modern world. They were set free from the bondage of the darkness of pride and prejudice, hate and revenge in the distant past.

The far-reaching impact of the mission school was that local church leadership was indigenized. As discussed earlier, the main purpose of the mission school was to raise pastors and evangelists among the locals. As a result, those who finished the mission school in the village became the teachers in the village school. They became pastors and evangelists to go out to the neighboring villages and tribes. As reported earlier, Yangpenchang in Aonokpu (NokpoImchen) finished his village school, then he became a teacher in the mission school in the village. Earlier, there was no teacher among the people in the village in Aonokpu. So, a teacher named Takutoba from Chnagki village came to Aonokpu.in 1903. Takutoba served in the mission school as a teacher and he also served as pastor. After Takutoba, Pangerniken from Warumong village came to Aonokpu village as a teacher. Pangerniken devoted his entire time for the mission school from 1923-1959. Thus, Pangerniken was rightly voted by the community

as the father of modern education in Aonokpu village during their centenary celebration in 2006.[16]

The same pattern continued through the period under investigation among the Ao churches. Mr. & Mrs. Sosangniken from Merangkong village were reportedly the first evangelists among the Ao Nagas in 1910. One named Semsalepzung was the first Ao Naga sent out as pastor and evangelist to the other tribes beyond the Dikhu River. Semsalepzung served for 46 years (1910-1956) in the field.[17] It was curious to find that there was hardly any report on the life of Semsalepzung and his work after being in the active ministry for nearly 50 years. What did he do? Was he an effective evangelist? The fact that the evangelist stayed in the ministry for 49 years suggests that he must have done substantial work in the field. We lament the lack of information on certain important missions. However, as reported earlier, it must have been hard to oversee the growing churches by just three missionary families at Impur Mission Station at that time. So, the local churches were entrusted to the local leadership throughout the period under investigation.

Local Church Leadership

In this section we will examine one very important aspect of social transformation by Christian mission. The mission allowed itself into the likeness of local people. In other words, the mission incarnated into the Ao Naga village and transformed their social structure. We want to begin with the local church leadership formation. What did the structure of the local church look like? What was their leadership formation? Did the church pastors receive salary on a regular

16. *Aonokpu Baptist Church Centenary Souvenir*, 1906-2006, p.13.

17. *ABAM, Centennial Album*, 1872-1972, p.23-24.

basis? How did the church support their staff? These are some important questions to ask in this study. Church leadership was organized in the form of a small leadership team. The team members would be duly elected for a term of three to five years, depending on the church. A leadership team of five or more, depending on the size of the church, called stewards or "Mapangsur" was set up under the leadership of the pastor. This leadership team was responsible for the governance and the daily operation of the church. The local church was independent from the ABMU at Impur Mission Station. Once every two to three years, a missionary might visit the church, or the church might invite the missionary on special occasions like the baptism of new converts. A church in remote places might not get this privilege, because it was too hard for missionaries to have oversight in such remote places without proper transportation. Thus, for all practical purposes, the local church operated under local leadership for governance.

Our records indicate that in the early days, local church pastors were voluntary workers; they were not salaried workers. Aonokpu (formerly Nokpo Imjen) Baptist Church was established in 1906, as number 24th under ABAM. On November 26, 1906, Rev. W. F. Dowd baptized 18 members and formed the church. On this occasion, Rev. Dowd wrote,

> Today the 16th of November 1906, eighteen have been baptized on the constituent members of the Nokpu Imjen church and celebrated for the first time in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. The following were baptized. Longrichang, Makenshilu, Sentinungla, Tsupongsangba, Tsuklaksangba, Pangersangla, Sajungla, Majangnaro, Tekanaro, Imsangla, Nungsangla, Tekasangla, Nokchangsangla, Kajenla, Karimenla, Nungsangwala, Merenkala, Kiremlila.[18]

It was reported that since its inception, in Aonokpu (Nopu Imjen) Baptist Church, there were seven pastors who served during 1908-1948. All of them worked on a voluntary basis

18. "*Aonokpu Baptist Arogo Centenary Souvenir,* 2006, p.10. The Aonokpu Baptist Church happened to be this author's own village. Makenshilu was his grandpa, and Longrichang was his grandpa's brother. The name Longrichang in Rev. Dowd's record is slightly written differently in the *Aonokpu Baptist Church Souvenir* but is the same person. It so happened that Longrichang or Longrijang is the author's given name. He was named after his grand uncle Longrichang. It was reported that Longrichang was the first educated person in the village.

without receiving a salary. Their names are as follows: Takutoba (1906-1907), Makenshilu (1908-1909), Longrijang (1909-1910), Noksangtemba (1910-1914), Aolepden (1915-1921), Imlinuken (1922-1930), Nokpangjemba (1930-1948). Aolepden was an interpreter, called "Dobashi" by the colonial administration. Except Makenshilu and his brother, Longrijang, the rest were all schoolteachers in the mission school. Yet their commitment to their calling to be pastors and church leaders was remarkable. They kept their faith. This church leadership structure was to be seen in all Ao churches.[19]

Yangpenchang who was a schoolteacher, later became pastor of the church in 1948 and served the church until 1975. Pastor Yangpenchang's salary was set for 20 rupees (about 10 cents) and 100 tins of rice a year. Imkongsangla became a women's pastor at the same church in 1951. She served the church until 1976. Imkongsangla's annual salary was 50 tins of rice. The disparity in salary between Pastor Yangpenchang and Imkongsangla must reflect the amount of responsibility one carries. Since the pastor shouldered the responsibility for the whole church, it was expected that the salary would be more.[20]

How did the village church raise funding to support their pastors? Tithes and voluntary offerings were the main source of income for the church. In the village, all the families were farmers, and they were expected to bring their first fruits from the land to the church treasury. As paddy farmers, every year during the harvest, every family would bring their rice to the mission barn, specifically built for tithe collection. If a family's yield was 200 tins of rice, the family

19. *ABAM Sesquicentenary Vision Publication Volume I* is the compilation of the church minutes from 1872-1971. The church records consistently maintained the same church leadership structure throughout the period under investigation.

20. The author of this study had the last opportunity to share with Imkongsangla about her personal story on February 8, 2020 and received great encouragement. After this meeting, Imkongsangla passed this life to enter eternal rest on December 14, 2020 at the age of 94, leaving a lasting memory in the author's mind.

would separate 20 tins as a tithe offering. This tithe offering applied not only to the paddy, but it also applied to all other resources of income. It is hard to figure this out, but eventually the farm produce would turn to cash. This was altogether a new way of living. It was totally restructured.

According to the ABAM *Minutes* reports, by 1897 there were thirteen churches in Ao country and three missionary families (Rev. Perrine, Rev Haggard, and the Clark family) at Impur Mission Station. The churches were scattered far off. The challenge was enormous. Considering such tremendous challenges, it would have been almost impossible for three missionaries to visit all the churches in the region to shepherd them. It was necessary to run the church under local leadership. The second aspect of church leadership was the mission's respect for local leadership. However, the American Baptists strongly believed that only an ordained minister should baptize a new convert. Missionary Clark, Dowd and other missionaries did not have a problem with non-ordained natives sharing the pulpit in a local congregation, but baptism and the Lord's Supper belonged strictly to ordained ministers. It was reported that the demand for baptism was growing in all Ao churches. Three or four missionary families could not have met this growing demand. So the mission was looking for a new mature Christian among the Ao Nagas to be ordained in the local congregation to minister water baptism to the new converts. A vigorous American Baptist manual for ordination was duly observed. In 1919, Rev. Subongwati of Changki village was ordained; he thus became the first ordained minister among the Ao Nagas in Nagaland.[21] Now we will move to another topic of population growth.

21. *ABAM Sesquicentenary Vision Publication,* Vol 1, 2014, p. 10.

Population Growth and the Mission

Population growth in the Christian era is a direct outcome of the mission school. Before the mission arrived, we do not have any evidence to report the exact population of the Ao Naga in the late 19th century when Clark first arrived at Molung in 1872. Ben Wati suggested that the Ao Naga population might have been about 15, 000 in 40 villages at that time. This was Ben Wati's best guess work. According to the 1921 census, the Ao Naga population was recorded as 30, 599.[22] Later, Ben Wati reported that the Ao Naga population was 35,000 in 1935. Unfortunately, we do not have a census report from 1936 to 1955. It might be because of the turmoil of war and the political unrest in the region that the government was not able to do the census. But, as seen above the scanty data available in our hands indicates a steady growth of population under the Christian era. This was directly related to evangelism and church planting, as we have discussed in chapter three.

A brief review of the Ao Naga headhunting culture would be helpful to support the argument for the population growth under the Christian mission. Headhunting was a social vice among the Ao Nagas in the distant past. The Ao Nagas constantly raided each others' villages, hunting for the enemy's head for a trophy. As a result, in many cases, after the raids, the enemy village population was reduced to half the size. These were not isolated situations, but were the social norm in that distant culture and society. Moreover, they lived under constant fear and trauma without knowing when the inevitable will fall on them. Modern medical studies suggest that under such traumatic conditions, fertility rates go down. This was a social stalemate embedded in the culture that the Ao Nagas lived with from generation to generation. They must have endured untold misery, pain and sorrow in the headhunting culture. Women and children might not know whether

22. J. P. Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, Macmillan, London 1926, p. 4.

their husbands and fathers will ever be coming home from a headhunting raid. The Ao Nagas were entrapped in that social vicious cycle with no end in sight. A hostile social environment in headhunting tradition was not conducive to increasing their population (Gen 1:28).

The Role of the Impur Mission School

A word about Impur Mission School would be worthwhile in this section of our discussion. Impur Mission School was located at Impur Mission Compound, between Sungratus village and Mopungchuket village. Clark was a strategic leader, and soon he was looking for a more conveniently located mission station site, since Molungyimsen Mission Station was at the far north end of the Ao country. After the agreement with the villagers on both sites, Sungrtus and Mopungcheket, the mission promised to pay 200 rupees to the landowner, and the land was deeded to the ABMU. After the land deal was settled, Clark asked the Mopungchuket village elders what they would name the new mission compound. One of the elders spoke up and said that since Clark was the pioneer of this new mission field, the place will be called "Impur" which is translated as "Pioneer." The nuance would suggest it meant that Clark was adopted as the son of the soil, a pioneer. On October 1, 1894, Molungyimsen Mission Station was moved to the new location at Impur Mission Compound.[23] In Clark's mind this conveniently located new mission station would serve not only the Ao Nagas but other tribes beyond the Ao country. As mentioned elsewhere in this study, Kijung observed that Impur Mission School was aimed at higher education. Those who finished village school could go to Impur Mission School for higher education. Thus, Impur Mission School was like a theological college in those days.

23. Kijung, *Nokinketer Mongchen,* p. 64-65.

The Emergence of Native Leadership in the Field of Modern Education

A new era was emerging in the field of mission school for the natives. As stipulated in chapter two, there were five mission eras. Among them, the Rongseniken era from 1912-1929 was the flouringshing era in modern education among the Ao Nagas. We saw that the years 1901 to 1921 were a transitional period in terms of higher education among the native Ao Nagas. It was also a time of breaking ground to lay the foundation for a modern education system. A new generation of Ao Nagas was sprouting. Mr. Imtisosang Longkumer was the first Ao Naga to matriculate from Impur Mission School in 1922. After matriculation, Mr. Imtisosang pursued higher studies in theology. Mayangnokcha from Chnagki village was the first Ao Naga graduate in 1927. He was a graduate of Impur Mission School. If Kilep was the first litterateur, Mayangnokcha was rightly called the "father of modern education" in the state of Nagaland. He devoted his entire life to the cause of education in Nagaland. An undocumented story was told about Mayangnokcha and his friend from the Angami tribe named Kevisucha Angami who graduated from Gauhati University in 1927. A British political officer asked these two recent graduates what they wanted to do. The administration had offered a lucrative job opportunity right up front to both these young graduates. However, Maynagnockcha chose to become a humble schoolteacher and gave up a high paying secure job opportunity in the colonial administration.

An impetus among the new generation of Ao Nagas in the field of education was looming during the 1930s and 1940s. But a monster threat was in the making at the same time. At the end of WWI in 1919, Bismarck of Germany correctly predicted WWII in 20 years. The 1930s were plagued by the threat of WWII in the entire region. At this time, the British administration was drafting young men from every village into the Labor Corp to join the Allied Forces to stop

Japanese aggression before the Japanese annihilated the entire population in Naga Hills including the Ao Nagas. Thousands of young lives were sacrificed in the Kohima Battle in 1944, including native members of the Labor Corp, to preserve their freedom. The inscription in the monolith displayed at the entrance of the Kohima War Cemetery represents this solemn sacrifice of young lives for the sake of future generations. “When you go home, tell them of us, for your tomorrow we gave our today.” It was indeed a dark time for the Ao Nagas and all the Naga tribes. Normal life was not possible in the thick of a chaotic situation such as WWII. But not everything was lost in the darkness.

Mayangnokcha was a visionary leader in the field of modern education. He took upon himself the burden of leadership during those tumultuous years. He defied the odds and paved the way for future generations in the field of education of the Ao Nagas in Nagaland. He became headmaster at the government middle school in Mokokchung, about an hour drive from Impur Mission Station in 1941, with 130 students and 8 teaching staff. By then, there was a great need for a high school in the area. Since the colonial administration was not able to provide a high school, a private high school was established in 1943 in Mokokchung by Mayangnokcha. This private high school would have benefited not only students from the Ao area, but also students from the neighboring tribes of the Lotha, Sema, Sangtam, and Mon districts. In 1947, the first batch of six students matriculated toGauhati University from the privately run Mayangnokcha High School in Mokokchung. Two schools in the same vicinity were not necessary. So, the government run middle school was amalgamated with the private Mayangnokcha High School to establish a new government high school in Mokokchung in 1948. On February 1, 1948, Mayangnokcha was appointed headmaster of the Mokokchung Government High School by the

Governor of Assam, Sir Andrew Curly Clow.[24] The Governor was pleased to find such an innovative and savvy Ao Naga educator and promised to provide all financial assistance and necessary protection from the forces that might interrupt the running of the school.

Mayangnokcha's story does not end there. After serving the Mokokchung government high school for 15 years, Mayangnokcha retired from active service in 1963. In the course of time, numerous students graduated from Mokokchung Government High School, who later became leaders in various departments in the state and federal governments. It took just this one man, who empowered amny others. Mayangnokcha will be remembered for many years to come for his lifetime accomplishments in the field of modern education in Nagaland. He will especially be remembered by the Ao Nagas as a visionary in the field of modern education and a true leader who saw beyond the next mountain at the expense of personal fortune. Education is the backbone of a nation. Education enlightens minds and leads to a better world. But an entrepreneurial leadership drives the wagon. The mission school was responsible for such local leadership development among the native Ao Nagas. Even so, the Ao Nagas were fortunate to have such an innovative educator like Mayangnokcha.

Another educator, writer, and enlightened leader in the development of modern education in Nagaland was Kiremwati Ao. Kiremwati was born on July 16, 1929, in Mongchen village and began primary school in 1937, at the lower primary school where his father was a government schoolteacher. Upon his matriculation from Impur Mission School, Kiremwati went to Gauhati University in 1950; this young lad must have been joyous. Ironically, it was reported that his father was sad about losing his son to go to college. His father's dream was to have his son

24. The *Nagaland Post* reported that the name of the school was officially changed to Mayangnokcha High School on June 16, 1994 in honor of the first headmaster of the school. The school was upgraded into a Higher Secondary School in 2002.

become a village schoolteacher in his footsteps. Kiremwati was the first Ao Naga to go abroad and graduated with a master's degree in Earth Sciences from Cambridge University, Cambridge, England in 1959. Upon his return from England, Kiremwati was not attracted to high paying jobs or a career in politics but took a humble position as headmaster in the Wokha Government High School in early 1960.

Kiremwati's autobiography was published by *Window Media* in Dimapur, in 2009. In it, he confessed, "In life, at different stages, I wished to become various persons. But I could be just one person." [25] Recently, on March 21, 2017, Kiremwati was honored as "'architect of education in Nagaland,'" by *C-Edge College in Dimapur,* Nagaland.[26] In his speech, Kiremwati attributed the glory to God and the unseen hand of God that had led his humble life as a teacher. This learned man acknowledged that his mission school upbringing was responsible for his successful career in the Education Department in Nagaland. Commenting on the contribution made by Kiremwati in the field of education in Northeast India, the editors of *Education in North East India Experience and Challenges* wrote,

> Education does not aim at passing the written examination only, but it involves development of the entire personality and life of the student…The immeasurable qualities of life such as health, character, hard work, honesty, and such others develop through proper education. Education is not an end, but a means to produce useful citizens, who in turn make or unmake a nation.[27]

25. Merinews, October 29, 2009.

26. *Nagaland Post,* March 21, 2017.

27. Layden and Kumar: *Education in North East India Experience and Challenges,* Shilong, 20014, p. 355.

Unity and Reconciliation

Another landmark in the Ao Naga traditional society was the formation of the Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang (ABAM). In this section we will discuss the role of ABAM. ABAM was the apex body of the Ao churches. As reported earlier, the **first** Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang (ABAM) was held on March 12-14 in Molungyimsen village. This was 24 years after Clark first arrived in Molung (Dekhaihamong) village in 1874. It was reported that delegates from thirteen existing villages attended the first conference. Rev. S. A. Perrine was the chair and the native named Kilep (Aokilep) was the recorder.[28] The theme of the first ABAM conference was to spread the good news to all Ao Naga villages and beyond, and to advance modern education by having all the children attend mission school. The conference ended with the following two resolutions: (**1).** To raise funds to support missions to other tribes beyond the Dikhu River. (**2).** To unite all Naga tribes by spreading the Christian mission. The second resolution is significant for our current discussion. The resolution indicates unity and reconciliation was the objective goal of the ABAM.

The detailed *Minutes* of the conference proceedings from its inception in 1897-1971 were recently compiled and published by ABAM Literature & Education Department in 2014. The document is called *ABAM, Sesquicentenary Vision Publication, Volume I.* Research scholars in mission studies can make doctoral theses out of these invaluable huge documents in the future. For current study, our main discussion is limited to unity and reconciliation which was the cry of the first conference in 1897.

The formation of the ABAM to bring Ao churches under one umbrella has a profound impact on the Ao Naga social milieu. This has become a movement, later creating a dynamo

28. *ABAM, Sesquicentenary Vision Publication, Vol 1*. Impur, 2014, p. 5.

effect in all the other 14 tribes in Nagaland. As pointed out above, readers can see that the story of this movement for unity and reconciliation among the Ao Nagas was in the making for the last 24 years. During this gestation period of the movement, transformation was taking place at three levels: first the individual family, next the village community, and finally the whole tribe were united to stay together. At the first ABAM conference in 1897, we saw a native named Kilep (Aokilep) recorded. We can hardly ignore Kilep's influence in the movement of unity and reconciliation. Mr. Mayangnokcha, the first Ao Naga graduate in 1927, a renowned educationist in Nagaland once observed that if Socrates was responsible for the ancient Greek idea of cosmic unity, Kilep was responsible for the unity and reconciliation of the Ao Naga churches in its conceptual level. As reported in chapter two, Kilep had his residence in Molungyimsen village. Early on Kilep met Clark and worked together with him for vernacular translation. Kilep was one of the natives responsible for the publication of the Ao Naga Dictionary in 1911.

During those early years, while working together with Clark, Kilep coined this new word, "asenok" or "our" or it can be translated as "we" which implies "togetherness"in Ao grammar. It is hard to tell what transpired in Kilep's mind then, but it is not so difficult to imagine that the concept of unity and reconciliation stemmed from the Ao Naga social milieu of disunity. Ben Wati observed that the Ao Nagas did not have the concept "we" untill Clark arrived. To this point, the social life of the Ao Naga community was based on concepts like "your" or "us" or "they." According to Ben Wati, it was Kilep who invented the word "asenok." Kilep might have been attempting to do away with the old concept of the words "your," "us," or "they," and replace them with the concept of "we" or the new word "asenok." The new word "asenok," or "we," implies an embracing or inclusive attitude, in contrast to a prior divisive attitude. If this was what was in Kilep's mind, this was a huge breakthrough in the realm of the Ao Naga social

outlook. With the coming of the Christian mission, the Ao Nagas appeared to be getting ready to do away with the exclusive, elite mindset and embrace the idea of togetherness in their social outlook. Kilep's idea of "asenok" or "coming together" in a new social contract could have been a catalyst for global citizenship.[29] Given the head-hunting situation, in Kilep's days, embracing each other from different warring villages might have been a difficult task. But moving forward, the Ao Nagas were exposed to such a progressive idea, and they will fare well as they adapt this new way of thinking.

Another significant new word coined in the Ao Dictionary by Dr. Clark was "Arogo," simply speaking, the "church" in English. Clark explained the word "Arogo" as a combination of two different but related words: "arok" and "roko"[30] The nuances of arok roko implies "togetherness" or "unity." This word also implies "collective responsibility" and a "shared vision."[31] The equivalent of this word "Arogo" would be simply "church" or "assembly," or "synagogue" in Jewish tradition. But the concept of "Arogo" was more than simply the church in the Ao social milieu. What worked in Clark's mind when he coined this new word? Where did he get this idea from? What does he really mean by the word "Arogo?" To understand the background of this new word, it is important to understand the social milieu of the Ao Naga traditional society. In Clark's mind, the Ao Nagas were a divided community of people. At best, their unity was strictly confined to one's own village. The people outside of one's village were to be considered as the "enemy." Clearly, Clark must have envisioned bringing all the villages together as one body, the church, the body of Christ.

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29. *Harvard Gazette, Mark Zugerbergs's Commencement address at Harvard,* May 25, 2017.

30. Wati, *Aoo Kaketkenno Lipok,* p. 85.

31. Peter Senge: *The Fifth Discipline…,* Senge's business model is based on this "shared vision."

A new concept that Clark introduced was friendship. Earlier Clark invented the word "Tembar." or "medemmer"while working on the *Ao Naga Dictionary*.[32] The closest word for "Tembar" in English would be "friend" or "friendship." What led Clark to coin such a significant new word? What was running through his mind in the process? What was he trying to convey? It is hard to imagine the exact mood, but one can fairly speculate concerning Clark's social environment. The simple answer to the above questions was Clark wanted to befriend the Ao Nagas. Clark's idea of "friendship" might not have been an entirely new concept, yet this new concept appears to have given a social spin among the Ao Naga in their given social environment. True friendship is rare to find in that distant past among the Ao Nagas. Friendship here means "identifying with someone in thought, heart, and spirit."[33] The whole experience was designed to enable them to enter the closet relationship with the people they care about. A true friend is one who sacrifices his life for his friends. A willing friend would be ready to give up even princely privileges. (1 Samuel 20:39). A friend trusts his friend. Once you are a friend, you are a friend for life. Once Clark met the Ao Naga friends in their own place of social milieu, their friendship grew stronger. Our records indicate that the mission success story was in part attributed to its friendship evangelism.

32. In the 1950s and 1960s, a textbook for Ao Vernacular class was called *Medemmer Kaket,* which could be translated as *A book on Friendship.* In the book we read the story about friendship in the Bible. The story of Cain and his brother Abel was a bad example of friendship. But the relationship between the Crown Prince Jonathan and his little-known friend David was an excellent example of friendship.

33. Oswald Chambers in his classic title, *My Utmost for His Highest* discussed the concept of friendship in some detail. In Chambers' mind, friendship is more than an outward show; it is an inner connection. Friends have a heart-to-heart relationship. A friend is one who understands and cares for his friend. In the Fourth Gospel Jesus called his disciples "You are my friends." It meant he would do whatever it takes to help them.
This idea of friendship was not vividly found in the Ao Naga social milieu. But they embraced the friendship the Clarks and other missionaries rendered.

The formation of the ABAM was an epic event in the annals of the American Baptist mission history in Nagaland. If the American missionaries live all over again and go back to Impur Mission Station, they will be relieved that they could sleep peacefully at night. The peace of mind in the community would be the mainstay of the missionaries as well as the native Ao Nagas in modern society. The Association transpired unity and reconciliation in the society. Recently, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in his weekly homily on February 11, 2021 had said, "We must plant and nurture forgiveness. Otherwise, the weeds of hate will grow." The message of love and forgiveness tore the wall of hostility in the community. The transgression of the violent behavior in their headhunting tradition was forgiven and "by his wounds we are healed." (Is 53:4-5) Their age old hate and enmity in the headhunting culture was healed. The Christian Mission reconciled the Ao Nagas and brought the people to stay together. To "stay together" can be said as "cleave" like a marriage bond. (Gn 2:24). The secret of "togetherness" of loyalty results in cohesion in the family and society. "Love and righteousness kiss each other" (Ps 85:10). The local churches in the Ao villages, the formation of the ABAM and later on the other church associations speaks to the fact of unity and reconciliation. Alem-meren Ao, the Director of *Mission and Evangelism at ABAM,* Impur in the 1970s made the following thoughtful observation on the headhunting culture among the Ao Nagas in their bygone days. 'We were deeply entrenched in the darkness of hate and murder." This observation succinctly summed up the headhunting culture. The darkness was so deep that they were totally blinded by their own darkness. They were creeping in the darkness of pride and prejudice, thereby feeding into their own culture and tradition.

The ABAM *Minutes Reports* indicate that the number of churches were growing. The threat of WWI & WWII must have been a test to the church. But the churches continued to strive

slowly and gradually through the challenges. This was the evidence that the Ao churches were learning to stay together in unity. They were reconciling themselves to come together in a body. As cited elsewhere in this study, by 1955 there were 58 churches under ABAM within the Ao country. By this time, there were seven other church associations which were overseen by ABAM remotely. They are Lotha, Sema (Sumi), Sangtam, Phom, Konyak, Chang, Yimchunger, and Khimongan churches associations.

Intelligent Ao Nagas can see that unity and reconciliation under ABAM had political implications. Later, after India's Independence in 1947, the Ao Naga church leaders believed that it was their social responsibility to participate in the political movement for Naga sovereignty. There is more room to explore the role of Ao Naga churches in the political movement in the late forties and early fifties. But for want of time and space we shall leave the topic to future research studies.

ABAM expresses vision for the Ao Nagas tomorrow. Ben Wati had shared his opinion of the condition of the Ao Naga Christian in the future. As indicated in his *Khristan Takum,* Ben Wati's concern was the Godly influence of the Ao Naga churches in social life. His main concern was how we conduct ourselves to exert our influence in society. We are in the world, but not of the world. Ben Wati published a small booklet called *Asung Aor Tia* for private circulation only in 2005 in London. It is hard to capture the literal meaning of *Asung Aor Tia* in English. To the best of my knowledge, it could be translated as *Tomorrow Ao people's condition or situation.* In *Asung Aor Tia,* Ben Wati translated the English word "mindset" as "shisaren."[34] Simply put, the author's argument was yesterday, the Ao Nagas were self-glory seeking in our headhunting

34. Ben Wati, *Asung Aor Tia, The Ao Naga future,* Oxford, UK, 2005.p. 5

culture. As a result, we lived in a constant fear mongering social environment. What did we do? Ben Wati emphasizes a new mindset. We have a new Christian mindset *(phronesis*) (Ph 2:3-4)

In his writing Ben Wati reflected on the "discontinuity" and "continuity" in history. "Discontinuity" refers to the things we need to change. Change comes by adopting new ideas. One must be open to new ideas, flexible, and adaptable for change. For example, in the pre-Christian mission, the Ao Nagas kept their dead in the open on an erect platform to decay. In the Christian era, the Ao Naga believers buried their dead in the ground.[35] This was a significant change.

On the other hand, "continuity" refers to continuing the same for the sake of tradition like in the movie, *Fiddler on the Roof*. For example, the colonial administration strictly prohibited the Ao Naga Christian women and men from wearing western clothing. Instead they imposed only traditional clothing in school for students. As a result, for a while, the colonial administration awarded scholarships only to those students who wore traditional clothing in school. Kijung observed that the British government adopted such a stringent policy with an intent to preserve the Ao Naga culture and tradition.[36] So the mission reset the Ao Nagas' old mindset into a new Christian mindset. Let us move to our next topic of discussion on social transformation.

35. *ABAM, Sesquicentenary Vision Publication,* p.8. It says, "Kristan purtembo tasumang ali tur aremtsu." "Christians should bury their dead on the ground." The translation is mine.

36. Kijung was comparing the attitude of British government toward native education training program with that of American Baptist Mission Union wholehearted devotion to mission school. Kijung observed that the British government's willingness to support native education was with a string attached. Kijung cited official letters from the Sub-Divisional Office in Mokokchung to the Mission Secretary at Impur regarding scholarship awards favoring those who follow the local religion. "It is appropriate to grant more scholarship to those students who follow the indigenous religion. Would you kindly provide testimonies for two such students?" The SDO Mokokchung was asking to recommend two students who came to school with traditional attire. In the second letter the SDO office wrote. "Scholarship will be granted only to those students who are obligated to adhere to their traditional dress code." The second letter re-enforces the first one making it more specific with a punitive intent if the mission failed to comply with.

The Ao Naga Headhunting Tradition and Collective Traumas

The discussion below will support the argument for unity and reconciliation above. We want to explore a little further the causes of disunity among the Ao Naga headhunting tradition. What caused disunity? Why did the Ao Nagas consider each other as enemies in the first place? Hate and enmity in the headhunting tradition was the impediment against unity. We can form one answer for these two questions. Let us go back to examine the inherent violent behavior in the Ao Naga headhunting tradition in the past. The Ao Nagas might acknowledge the obvious by saying that headhunting was violent behavior. They brought home the enemy's head for a warrior's trophy. Moreover, they had to protect their family and defend their village from the enemy's raid. Thus, the Ao Nagas might argue that it was their culture; the way they were in the distant past. Still, that rationale does not answer the question of violent behavior. In fact, by rationalizing social reality, we expose vulnerability and deception into the culture. One must understand the nature and the cause of the violent behavior in the headhunting tradition in the first place. This is a new approach in this study. We shall briefly examine the violent behavior in the Ao Naga headhunting tradition in the light of the opinions shared by experts in the field of traumatic research studies in modern sciences.

Violence begets violence. If we look at the mindset of the early 1960s before Nagaland became a state under the Indian Union, the Ao Naga youth who grew up in the thick of violence unintentionally fell into violent behavior. Both women and men alike volunteered to join the Naga army to fight against the Indian army for political freedom. Dr. Salim Munayar, the Executive Director of *Musalaha Reconciliation Ministry* located in East Jerusalem, observed that a person born and grown in a violent neighborhood would most likely become violent. Dr. Munayar, who lived and worked in East Jerusalem most of his life, was an eyewitness of Jewish-

Palestinian conflicts and observed that violence perpetuated from one generation to the next generation.[37] Dr. Danny Brom, founding director of *Metiv, The Israel Psychotrauma Center* in Jerusalem observed the collective traumatization that occurred there. Trauma affects our mind. Dr. Danny Brom is of the opinion that violent behavior in the community is the symptom of traumatization. Dr. Danny Brom suggested a collective resolution. We must regulate our collective trauma, the violent behavior that affects the mind.

What causes communal violent behavior? Violent behavior was a social concern not only in ancient society, but violent behavior in social media can be found in the age of modern technology. Gina Ross, the founder of the *International Trauma-Healing Institutes* in the USA and Israel suggests that the cause of violent behavior is "unmet need."[38] Hatred and enmity are the cause of division and disunity in the community. As an expert, she sees that in some way rioters on the street are a traumatized group of people. Sir Simon Wessely, of the *Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience at King's College* in London observed that trauma affects the human brain. It can change the human brain in a negative way. However, Sir Simon Wessely also suggested that the human brain can be positively changed in a peaceful way in good time.

We can mirror the violent behavior of the Ao Naga headhunting tradition in the laboratory of the expert in the field of traumatic research studies in modern time. These experts' opinions in the field shed light on this dark side of the culture in the distant past. They were entrapped in violent behavior in the culture that was passed on from one generation to the next generation. The tragedy was their trauma stories were never shared. Thus, the community

37. This author and the cross-cultural study cohort from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary had a rare opportunity to have a special lecture with Dr. Munayar in Bethlehem College, Bethlehem, West Bank, in May 2015.

38. Violent behavior is the expression of emotional feeling, unfair treatment, or social injustice.

remained traumatized. The story of war trauma among the Ao Naga is another topic that calls attention for research and development in the future. On the positive note, we hear Sir Simon Wessely's opinion that the human brain can change positively in a peaceful manner in a more favorable social environment.

The hate and enmity that was embedded in the headhunting culture must have separated the Ao Naga villages from one another. This hatred and enmity were perpetuated from one generation to the next generation in a social vicious cycle. The story is the Naga raids in colonial settlements in the Assam valley had been a major concern for the colonial administration. Initially the colonial administration had no intention to annex the Ao Naga Hills into the British India territory. “Don’t bother us and we will not bother you,” was the attitude of the colonial administration at first. But the constant raids became a “menace” for the administration. The colonial official documents called, *Foreign Department, External Affair, February 1890, File No 156* clearly indicate that unwillingly, the administration decided to annex the Ao Naga Hills into their territory in 1890. The main purpose to annex the Ao Naga Hills was to put an end to their violent behavior. However, the colonial administration's corrective measure did not stop the violent behavior in the culture.

Summary

In summary, the mission took hold of their land, the land of *Warrior’s abode* and made it Christ’s own land. This is my Father’s land. Like iron being a good conductor, when the heat is applied to the raw iron, the iron begins to melt. In this analogy, the Ao Naga traditional ethos was comparable to the raw iron and the Christian mission was like the penetrating laser beam that would bring transformation within the culture. The Christian mission translatability and

adaptability was found in the culture. The response was expected. The age old Ao Naga traditional ethos began to mellow down in their social fabric. The core values and principles would be flexible, readjusted and take on a new format.

By vernacular translation, the Christian mission penetrated the Ao Naga social milieu, and the Ao Naga entered mission. Vernacular translation was more than just the ability to read and write and do the numbers. This was the catalyst of transformation. The Ao Naga traditional society became versatile at various levels. In the first place, their worldview was drastically changed from nature worship to embracing the one true living God. From polytheism to monotheism. The Ao Nagas were rethinking slavery in the headhunting culture. One can understand that the violent behavior could be treated by regulating collective trauma in their headhunting tradition. The evidence of the healing in the culture was reflected in the population growth among the Ao Nagas during the period under review. The formation of the Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang (ABAM) was another concrete evidence of unity and reconciliation which could have been out of reach in the distant past.

But these were not all about the indigenizing mission. The mission school took the social transformation to the next level. There was a far-reaching significant impact of the mission school, which indigenized the local church leadership. The local church became self-supporting throughout the period under investigation. By 1922, the Ao Naga native leaders had become the main beneficiary of the modern education system.

In recent years, there was a quest in the circle of the Ao Naga intelligentsia. Did the Ao Nagas give up too much? This is a legitimate question. However, one must take the reciprocity into account for social transformation for a mutual benefit. The Ao Nagas were willing to give up old social habits and replace them with new ones. It only makes sense for them to trade in the

old car to buy a new one. They must let go of something which has become obsolete in the culture. It was like the fishermen who didn't mind giving up the small fish in the fringes of their net when they hauled the big fish for themselves in the boat. The Ao Nagas would not regret paying the cost for the transaction in the transition.

CONCLUSION

For this study, to turn the pages of the American Baptist Mission in the Ao Naga Hills or Nagaland was personally a pleasant experience. To find the author's own family members' names in those documents was sheer joy. Moreover, flipping through the pages of history prompted curiosity to our inquisitive mind and found answers to many of the questions. As we dive into the deep, we discover so many new details in the story. So much more than the present study could possibly accomplish. Yet, it is time to bring closure to this study in the following pages.

It has been nearly 150 years since Rev. Edward. W. Clark & Mrs. Mary M. Clark first landed in the Ao Nagas Hill District of Assam in 1872. Since then, history has been sitting there in the library and in the National Archives for such a long time. It was appropriate to revisit such historical documents in the light of changing times. There was a call for a fresh look into these historical documents and to bring in a new perspective by interpreting the same old documents in the new frame of mind of modern readers. To re-examine what transpired in the process of conversion in the Ao Naga Hills in the light of modern scholarship in mission studies was the attempt of this study.

The Ao Nagas, who very little known then were cut off from the rest of the world until the American Baptist missionaries arrived in their land in the late 19th century. Thus, the

Christian mission put the Ao Nagas in Nagaland on the world map. The Ao Nagas happened to be the first to encounter the Christian mission in Nagaland. By virtue of being the first, the Ao Nagas were privileged to carry the mission to the 14 other Naga tribes and beyond. For this reason, it was appropriate to choose the Ao Naga tribe for this study.

After 150 years later, the Ao Nagas who have lived and worked with the mission are all gone today. In a sense it means, the modern Ao Nagas inherit and own the American Baptist Mission historiography in Nagaland. It was fascinating to investigate such historical extant and to reflect on what transpired in the traditional society in the process of conversion by mission. We are aware that when we tell our own story to the world, we bring in our own interpretation into the story, therefore, we are not free from our own biases. Thus, it was important to remember the objectivity in history. The theological framework of this study was based on Prof Lamin Sanneh's vernacular translation and Prof Andrew F. Walls' Indigenizing Principle.

During the discussion, this study reviewed three sources of literature: primary, monographs, and secondary sources both general and ecclessiastical. With regard to primary sources, recently ABAM *Sesquicentenary Vision Publication* was made available. These documents contained 100 years of the Christian mission history (1872-1972). The detailed *Minutes* of the ABAM annual conference supply ample information in the area of statistical church growth, the local church leadership formation, and the mission activities beyond ABAM. However, this study found that these documents are so huge that it required more analytical research studies. On the secondary sources side, there were prominent literate Ao Nagas and church leaders who left valuable accounts. These accounts reflected the local perspective. The local flavor was important to authenticate the mission activities. Their eyewitness testimony gave deep insight into the social transformation process. The drawback was their works were all in Ao

vernacular. For today's readers to read and translate their writing was a challenge. It took great effort to make things work for this study.

In this study, vernacular mission and the indigenizing principle were understood as a contextualized mission. The Ao vernacular translation was unique in the sense that the Ao Nagas did not have their own script. The mission had to start from the scratch to provide them the script. For example, the making of the *Ao Naga Dictionary* took nearly forty years for Clark and his party. Later on, the *Ao Naga Dictionary* was the foundation of Aoo literature. The complete Bible translation took 35 years owing to unavoidable circumstances. In the meanwhile, all the American missionaries at Impur Mission Station were learning and became fluent in Ao dialect. The missionaries' engagement to study the local dialect suggested that the mission was localized. Thus, by vernacular translation, not only the mission entered the Ao Naga social milieu, but the Ao Naga entered the mission.

English became the official language among the Ao Nagas and eventually in Nagaland because of two reasons: First, there were 3 commonly spoken dialects among the Ao Nagas, and 21 other dialects in Nagaland. Second, the colonial administration preferred Assamese for their administrative purpose in Nagaland. Given the situation, if not English, Assamese would have been a preferred common language in Nagaland. To their advantage in the outside world, English became their common language. However, the importance of mother tongue will never diminish among the Ao Nagas in Nagaland. During the course of study, we saw that there was so much room to improve the Aoo literature through linguistic research and development in the future.

The study witnessed that the Christian mission found its way into the Ao Naga social milieu through mission school and transformed the social structure. Apparently, the native education program was not the mission mindset initially. Following the gospel spirit, the mission

priority was to “preach” the gospel, not schooling the natives or doctoring their bodies. However, the mission practitioners took a pragmatic approach in the mission field. They must have altered their policy to incorporate the mission school. Once the mission school was incorporated (1894), it propelled evangelism and church planting. It further led to every Ao Naga village having a mission school and establishing a local church.

The first ABAM conference was held in Molungyimsen Baptist Church in 1897. The vision of this first conference was to advance the mission school in all the Ao Naga villages. Thus, the Ao Naga children were exposed to modern education for the first time. The mission school would transform their worldview. An even more significant transformation that took place at the village was that the mission school provided the children an alternative to the headhunting tradition. The headhunting tradition was abandoned altogether in all Ao villages. Thirteen local churches participated in this first conference, and each local church was run by local leadership. Only a handful of missionary families at Impur Mission Station were not in a position to oversee the local churches that were widespread. The formation of the ABAM was significant because since then, the natives took the leadership responsibility of the local churches. What was the purpose of the mission school? This study found that the main purpose of the mission school was primarily to raise pastors and evangelists. Many of those who had graduated from the village mission school went out to evangelize other neighboring villages.

The study also found that Impur Mission School played a vital role for the development of local leadership. Impur Mission School was like a theological college in those days. Those who wanted to pursue higher studies after graduating from the village mission school went to Impur Mission School. It was expected that those who graduated from this school should become the church leaders. Imtisosang Longkumer from Changki village was the first matriculate from

Impur Mission School. He went to Easterm Theological College, Assam for higher studies in theology. Kijung became ABAM General Secretary in 1932, the first Ao Naga to hold that position. Thus, the mission school was transforming the Ao Naga society into a corporate undertaking.

The study also found that later on, healthcare was also incorporated in the mission. What would they do if a native called at night for a snake bite? Or if a pregnant woman came to the door asking help for delivery? The mission was confronted with this human dilemma. When the missionaries cared for the snake bite and the pregnant woman, the natives opened their hearts to the mission. In this way, the mission embraced a holistic approach by doing care ministry. As a result, Impur Dispensary was found to be the medical center for the entire Naga Hills.

What did the mission do? What did it look like? Like a small yeast that influenced the whole dough, the mission entered into the Ao Naga social milieu and transformed the society. The vernacular translation was the axis to the culture. It provided the mission with access to the local culture and transformed the society. **First,** the study found that the Ao Naga worldview was transformed. The Ao Naga theory of origin of life was shifted from "Longrok" to the Biblical concept of creation. Today, "Longtrok" still exists near Longsa village in Mokokchung district, but the Ao Nagas were given the alternative belief system in Jesus Christ, the Word of God. (Jn 1:1-2) **Second,** their polytheistic idea was transformed into monotheism. Their gods "Lijaba" and "Longkeezungba" were made into One true living God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Third, mission school. The study found that the native education program was not the mission mindset initially. However, once the mission school was incorporated, it went on full steam. That every village must have a mission school was the vision. As a result, children were found to be in the classroom instead of going headhunting. This was a remarkable transformation

of society by mission. In the process, the mission school became synonymous with evangelism and church planting. As a result, it turns out that the mission school was the most effective tool for evangelism and church planting throughout the period under investigation. **Fourth,** the formation of the local church leadership. From the discussion particularly in chapter three, the study found the local church was run under the local leadership. Each local church was administered by a team of leadership with the pastor at the head. This was another new social structure that emerged by mission. The local church was found to be self-supporting. Each local church under ABAM was self-supported throughout the period under review.

Fifth, the study found that violent behavior was embedded in the Ao Naga headhunting tradition. The causes of the violent behavior in the culture stemmed from collective trauma. It was reasonable to say that the whole community was traumatized in the distant past. There was no remedy for this social malaise in the headhunting tradition. The colonial administration made their effort, but their corrective measure to stop the headhunting tradition was found in vain. Therefore, their violent behavior continued until the mission arrived in their turf and they were liberated. **Sixth,** this study found that the Ao Nagas were rethinking slavery in their traditional society. Though the topic was sensitive among the Ao Naga intelligentsia, slavery was found in the Ao Naga traditional society before the Christian mission arrived in their land. It was found that slavery was believed to be an inherent nature of the headhunting tradition.

Seventh, unity and reconciliation. The study found that the Ao Nagas were systematically divided in their headhunting traditional society. Unity and reconciliation was not possible in such a divisive social environment. The formation of the ABAM in 1897 was significant in the Ao Naga traditional society. This was a watershed in the social transformation. The concept of togetherness and oneness was incorporated in the Ao Naga social milieu. The age

old hate and enmity were broken. They were reconciled and brought under one umbrella to stay together in the family and society. **Eighth,** and finally, the Ao Naga headhunting tradition and collective traumas which were embedded in the culture. The Christian mission was responsible to expose the collective traumas in the community stemming from headhunting tradition.

During the discussion, the author wanted to cover all the areas within the scope of this study. However, in the process some of the important areas might have been left out, though unintentionally. The study attempted but could not cover one important topic: the position of women in the Ao Naga traditional society. Another urgent topic was the peace mission. Social injustice and the unfair distribution of income caused unrest in the society. One very important topic that needs immediate attention is quality theological education in order to further examine the value of contextual theology in Ao Naga society.

In the final analysis, like the lubricated oil made to perform the engine more efficiently, the mission was to engage and interact with the local culture. In the process, the mission repaired and renewed the aged old Ao Naga custom and tradition and made it stronger. In this sense, the mission was therapeutic to the culture and society. It healed the wounded scar in the culture and reconciled them in unity into one body of Christ, the church. This was a new beginning. The mission created endless potential in the Ao Naga culture and society. As a result, a complete freedom to flourish and bloom in the field of modern education, art and literature, social, political, economic welfare, and spiritual well-being so the community may thrive in the future.

Suggestions for Future Research Study and Development

It was a pleasure of learning through the pages of nearly 150 years of history. As we like to say, the more we beat the rug, the more the dust. Research scholars are limited by time and

space. Likewise, each study has its own limit. However, we find there is more room for further research studies in different areas of the American Baptist Mission. We recommend the following suggestions for future research and development in the following fields of studies.

Upgrade Aoo literature study to a graduate level in Nagaland University.

Ao vernacular translation was aimed at Bible translation. As we have discussed in chapter two, the vernacular translation grew into full scale of Aoo literature development. Later, there was a spelling controversy stemming from three dialects commonly spoken among the Ao Nagas: Chungli, Mongsen, and Changkiri. It was assumed that since Clark first lived in a Chungli speaking village, naturally, he developed the *Ao Naga Dictionary* in Chungli. At the same time, Mongsen was also equally rich in nuance and meaning. With modern linguistic technology, these nuances could be included to make Ao vernacular stronger. Ao Nagas enjoy the benefit of English as an official language. However, the Aos lost their own mother tongue to English. One can express emotion and feeling more fully through one's own mother tongue. We understand that language is a key element of understanding our own culture and society. In recent years, the Angamis have successfully upgraded their language, Thynieie to the graduate level; next could be the Ao language. The Ao Nagas will win again in the cultural front when they recover some of their lost nuances in Ao vernacular.

Literature review

This study invested in a good number of resources to collect primary and secondary sources. As indicated in chapter four, in recent years we have acquired a good number of secondary resources. One of them is the ABAM *Sesquicentenary Vision Publication* published

by the ABAM Literature & Education Department. This is a huge and valuable historical extant, worth 100 years of the ABAM annual conventions *Minutes* from its inception in 1897 to 1971. As the title suggests, the purpose for this publication was to enlarge ABAM vision. Further analysis of these documents will ensure the ABAM mission vision. ABAM should invest in analyzing these documents in the future.

Level Up Theological Education

Impur Mission School was put at par with theological college in those days. The reason was it produced numerous leaders both in the church and the society in general. However, the church did not produce any theological college or seminary in 100 years of our mission history. The first, Clark Theological College, in Aolichen was established in 1972. As such, the issue at stake was quality theological education. Especially, the Ao Naga churches should improve contextualized theology. With modern study tools the Ao Naga scholars can find new meaning in our belief system. We must level up our theological education.

Peace Mission

Nagaland Peace Mission was founded in 1971 in Kohima. The tumultuous political situation in the state demanded Nagaland Peace Mission to deal with the Naga political issue, the political conflict between Indian and Nagaland. But peace also had to do with social justice, and the justice had to do with equity in the society. The unfair distribution of wealth and income in society causes unrest. Rich are getting richer and the poor are becoming even poorer. In the long run this unfair distribution of wealth and income will lead to communal conflict and dispute in society.

Position of Women in Ao Naga Christian Society

That women were well respected in the Ao Naga traditional society is an acceptable statement. The position of women might not have been perfect, but women enjoyed a prominent position in the Ao Naga traditional society. The monographs left by J. P. Mills and Hutton would qualify this statement. Mary Mead Clark mentioned Mrs. Tongpangla as the first Ao Naga woman who became a teacher and church planter in Yajang village. Like Tongpangla, there were many prominent Ao Naga women who served the church and the mission. First, it is only fair to recognize their services. Second, and more important, one may ask in the circle of research scholars, what is the position of women in the Ao Naga Christian society.

Traumas of War and Healing

The Ao Nagas were familiar with war traumas. In their headhunting traditional society, they must have endured a great deal of uncertainty. In the Christian era, as they were coming out of their own culture, they were confronted by two world wars. The Ao Nagas were directly involved in both WWI (1914-1919), and WWII (1939-1945). The entire period under the investigation was marred with collective war trauma for the Ao Nagas. As noted elsewhere in this study, the Ao Nagas also endured their own war trauma in the 1940s and 1950s. In the aftermath of India's Independence in 1947, they were thrown into a political confrontation with India. Their political conflict with India was worse than headhunting in magnitude. The Ao Naga did not have a chance to process their collective war traumas. Thus, they never told their story. Perhaps, the Ao Nagas were not even aware as a community that they needed healing from collective traumas in the past. Their traumatic mind needed to be brought to awareness for

therapeutic treatment. Church counseling ministry can provide proper tools to help process their collective traumas in the community.

Unity and Reconciliation

As we have seen during this study, tribalism was the major issue among the Ao Nagas in the headhunting traditional society in the past. Their society was systematically divided, and their sovereignty went down to their village level. Every village enjoyed their own form of sovereignty in the distant past. In other words, headhunting was a necessary evil, one can say, to protect their family and defend their village. We do not have any evidence to show any form of political entity outside of one's own village among the Ao Nagas in their traditional society. As we have noted in our discussion, the first ABAM conference in Molungyimsen village in 1897 was the first of its kind. As we have reported there were delegates from 13 local village churches in that conference. One of the main purposes of the conference was to unite all the Ao villages under Christian mission. One can see that unity among the villages was the burning issue. Since then, the peace and reconciliation ministry has been the thrust of the ABAM. The Ao Nagas were reconciled and united. They must live together in unity (Ps 85:10), and peace (Hb 12:14). It takes a village to come together as a community to live in harmony.

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VITA

- Rev. Abraham Longri Lincoln, a humble servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, born on February 2, 1959, Nagaland, India.
- Early education at Aonokpu Lower Primary School, matriculated from Kohima Government High School (1982). Graduated from Christ College, Bangalore, with the bachelor's degree of BA in Economics, History, and Political Science, July 1985.
- Earned MA, M. Phil (History), at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi (1985-1989).
- Co-Founder of the University Bible Fellowship (UBF), JNU, New Delhi chapter, (1987-1991).
- Served as pastor at the University Bible Fellowship Church, Chicago, Illinois (1992-2005). Founded the University Bible Fellowship Church, New Haven chapter, Connecticut (2005-2012).
- Earned MA in Urban Ministry at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Center for Urban Ministry Education (CUME), Boston (2013).
- The Incarnate of God in Christ Jesus in John 1:14 affirms my passion for the indigenizing mission of the American Baptist Mission among the Ao Naga tribe, Nagaland, India.
- Married to Dr. L. Elizabeth Lincoln, father to three daughters and one son; Susanna Lincoln, Sarah Lincoln, Sharon Lincoln, and Samuel Lincoln.
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